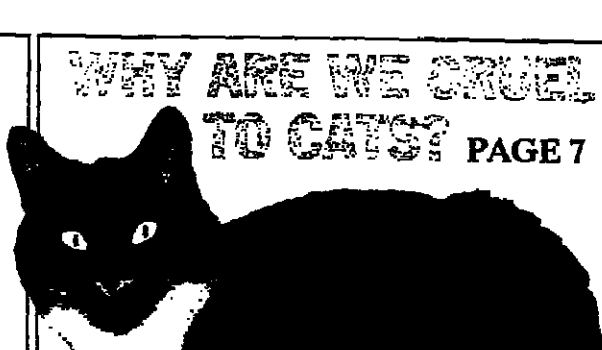




PAGE 19



WHY ARE WE CRUEL TO CATS? PAGE 7



THE HIDDEN WORLD BEHIND MY PIANO Alan Coren PAGE 20



ROYAL OPERA FOR ALL PAGE 41

'The rot has got to stop'

ITV rebuked over diet of soap operas

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

INDEPENDENT television companies were reprimanded yesterday for flooding their schedules with soaps and drama serials, and told: "The rot has got to stop."

Peter Rogers, chief executive of the Independent Television Commission, deplored the lack of diversity on ITV and the unremitting diet of long-running serials, such as *Coronation Street*, *Emmerdale* and *The Bill*, that were "increasingly dominating the early evening schedules."

He conceded that that most of ITV's drama output was of high quality, but it was "crowding out" other forms of entertainment — particularly light entertainment and comedy — and depriving viewers of more intellectually challenging fare.

The network should concentrate more on arts, documentary and children's drama, he said. The companies had fallen behind their licence obligations in all three areas and if the position were not rectified there would be trouble.

The commission, which is responsible for licensing and regulating commercial television, has the power to fine broadcasters millions of pounds and to revoke their licences if they breach its codes of practice or the terms of their licences.

But the television companies immediately hit back, saying that the 35 million viewers who regularly tuned into their soaps and dramas could not be wrong. "We are splitting hairs," one senior ITV source said. Leslie Hill, chair-



"Hey, it would make a brilliant idea for a soap"

man of the ITV Network Centre, said: "Our viewers have come to expect a rich diet of well-written, well-told and well-made stories from us and we wish to continue to serve them in this way."

Mr Rogers said that viewers did not necessarily want so much soap or drama — or the extra editions of *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale* that had been introduced in response to competition. "Soaps, serials, do require a very strong commitment from

viewers in order to avoid the spell being broken. I do have some unease about the additional hours that are being devoted to serials," he said.

The commission's report went on to note that the most successful ITV programmes in 1996 were *A Touch of Frost*, which drew audiences of 17 million or more, and *Heartbeat* and *London's Burning*, which dominated Sunday peaktime with audiences of up to 16 million each. "It is hardly surprising that, once again, ITV found it difficult to refresh the schedule with series with the potential to match such enduring appeal," the report said. But Mr Rogers pointed out that despite sticking with such tried and tested programmes, ITV had continued to lose audience share last year, while both BBC channels and Channel 4 held or improved their positions.

Time devoted to documentaries had fallen by a third to 40 minutes a week between 1995 and 1996 and ITV had signally failed to protect its flagship programme, *Newsnight*, which appeared only 18 times last year compared with 36 the year before. Arts programmes, too, had declined — from 33 to 31 minutes, and children's drama was down from 76 to 70 minutes. "The amount of programmes in these categories must, in 1998, be restored to at least the levels achieved in 1995," Mr Rogers said. "If the goods are not delivered within the time-scales there will have to be an outstandingly good explanation."

Continued on page 2, col 2



Emmerdale, Coronation Street and The Bill attract huge audiences, but do people really want more of them? asks the independent television watchdog

Anti-abortion election film banned as distasteful

By DANIEL MCGRODY AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

A PARTY political broadcast showing an abortion being performed has been banned by all major television companies for breaching guidelines on taste and decency.

Anti-abortion campaigners last night threatened to leave television screens blank during their election broadcast tomorrow night if a High Court appeal fails to overturn the decision today.

The BBC, Channel 4, Channel 5 and ITV, have told them to cut two minutes, 13 seconds, including scenes of an aborted foetus left in a dustbin liner and discarded limbs in rubbish bags.

Ruth Davies, of the Pro-Life Alliance, which is fielding more than 50 election candidates, said: "How can we put across our message about the horrors of abortion unless we show the violent reality of this operation? This wasn't deliberately made to shock as a stunt. We want women to see this, and so we may buy time to show it privately in cinemas if we have no other choice."

The film, scripted by Bruno Quintavalle, the director of the Pro-Life Alliance, includes scenes from an American documentary called *Hard Truth*, which features abortions carried out in Atlanta, Georgia.

"The BBC considered the sequence, headed *A Woman's Right to Choose*, shot-by-shot with considerable care," Anne Sloman, the BBC's chief political adviser, wrote to Mr Quintavalle, the party's founder, yesterday. "The BBC regards that sequence to be totally unacceptable on taste and decency grounds and we would not broadcast it under any circumstances at any time."

Liberty, which supports a woman's right to choose an

abortion, provided lawyers for the Pro-Life Alliance because it campaigns for freedom of expression.

The film begins with a blank screen and a woman's voice talking about "a modern day holocaust which has claimed the lives of five million innocents. This is the truth about abortion. This is the film they did not want you to see". It says: "Unless you act now, more than one million babies will be aborted before the next general election."

The BBC, under its charter, is required not to "include anything which offends against good taste or decency ... or be offensive to public

Chez Blair

Tony Blair allows the world into his kitchen and his innermost thoughts in what Labour's spin chiefs are describing as a "ground-breaking broadcast" ... Page 11

feeling". The Independent Television Commission's Code has similar wording.

The BBC Producers' Guidelines, quoted to the Pro-Life Alliance, state that "the basic pillars of decency rest on telling the truth about human experience, including its darker side, but we do not set out to demean or to brutalise through word or deed, or to celebrate cruelty."

The broadcasters say they expect campaigners to provide them with material which is suitable for viewing according to their rules. The stations all regard the contents of the film as unsuitable for showing at any hour.

Reports, analysis, pages 9-14

Russia and China forge new links

President Jiang Zemin of China began a visit to Russia to end decades of tension between the two neighbours and lay the foundations for a partnership to challenge America's global supremacy.

Sino-Russian trade now amounts to some £5 billion a year, and Moscow has re-established itself as China's main arms supplier. Page 15

Victims of the of history

This by the coast, in Kent, Norfolk, East and North Wales, could find blacklisted by in-prisoners are forecast much as 15 inches and 50 years because warning. Page 30

Labour dashes Argentine hopes on the Falklands

By MICHAEL EVANS AND MICHAEL BINYON

LABOUR was last night forced into an outright denial of a claim by Jorge Domínguez, the Argentine Defence Minister, that it will hand over the Falkland Islands if it wins the election.

He told *Jane's Defence Weekly*, published today, that he had had meetings with several Labour politicians, including Tony Blair, the party leader. He is quoted as saying: "I believe that, after May 1, a new phase of review of the Malvinas [Falklands] with a new administration will start."

Señor Domínguez also claimed that Guido Di Tella, the Argentine Foreign Minister, had had meetings with

Labour politicians, also including Tony Blair. The implication of his remarks provoked strong denials from Labour. "There is not a shred of truth in the suggestion that there might be any change of policy towards the Falklands if Labour is elected," the party said in a statement last night.

It added that if the Argentinians were expecting any change in the British approach to the sovereignty of the islands, they were both mistaken and ignoring the clear message given to both the islanders and the Argentine Government over recent years.

The party also denied that

Mr Blair had had either meetings or discussions with the Argentine Foreign Minister, but a Labour spokesman said it was possible that Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, had met Señor Di Tella.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said: "This is a serious and disturbing occurrence. Mr Blair should not only clarify but explain why the Argentine Government believes that ... they would get the Falkland Islands back."

And a Foreign Office spokesman added: "The Government is committed to the principle of self-determination for the islanders. We've made that clear repeatedly."

Ferries forced back in Calais blockade

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

FRENCH fishermen yesterday blocked the port of Calais, forcing ferries to turn back and wrecking the travel plans of hundreds of holiday-makers and lorry drivers.

The fishermen strung their boats across the harbour entrance, apparently in protest at being ordered to use wider-mesh fishing nets.

More than 600 passengers on two P&O ferries arrived back in Dover last night after the ships were forced to turn round in mid-Channel. But a third ferry, the *Pride of Dover*, broke through the blockade. The ferry arrived back in Dover last night, where police had set up roadblocks to advise lorry and car drivers not to attempt the crossing

until the unexpected French action had ended. Passengers were being offered alternative crossings to the Belgian port of Zeebrugge or through the Channel Tunnel.

The fishermen's action was expected to last for 24 hours, but could be followed by further protests later.

About 2,000 lorries travel between Dover and Calais daily and the blockade was condemned by the Freight Transport Association. Members are due to hand a giant invoice for £800 million (£100 million) to the French Embassy today for money owed to British and other drivers as a result of the French lorry drivers' blockade of Calais in November.

Tiny pump to revolutionise heart surgery

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A BRITISH surgeon who has perfected a tiny titanium pump to give diseased hearts a six-month "holiday" hopes to carry out the first human trial this year.

The battery-powered device, no bigger than a thumb, can be fitted inside a heart in a simple operation and take over the work of pumping blood round the body. Powered by a unique relay of wires threaded under the skin

of the neck and fixed to the back of the skull to reduce infection the device is far in advance of older — and bigger — artificial pumps.

Stephen Westaby, who runs the heart centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, says if clinical trials go well the pump will be mass produced and used to help the tens of thousands of people suffering from heart disease.

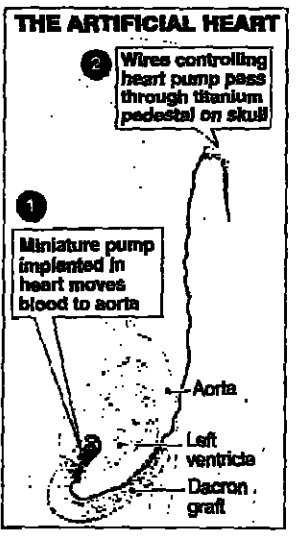
"The results of trials so far are dramatically positive and we are terribly excited by it all," Mr Westaby said last

night. "Bench trials have shown that the pump not only works perfectly but that a diseased heart will usually recover when it does not have to work for a while. The pump gives the heart a holiday and after about six months it is usually ready to function normally again."

The Radcliffe team have been working on the pump with Robert Jarvik, an American pioneer of artificial hearts. His first, grapefruit-sized, design has been tried on five patients in Britain, two of

them fitted by Mr Westaby. It helped them all to live longer but there were so many inconveniences with the design that the Radcliffe team stopped using them two years ago and collaborated with the American team in developing a much smaller device. Called the Jarvik 2000, this can pump up to ten litres of blood a minute and will last indefinitely if the diseased organ fails to recover.

"Although the American team have been involved in



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TV & RADIO	54, 55	LETTERS	21	ARTS	41-43	MEDIA	26, 27
WEATHER	28	OBITUARIES	23	CHESS & BRIDGE	50	STYLE	18
CROSSWORDS	28, 56	SIMON JENKINS	20	COURT & SOCIAL	22	LAW REPORT	49

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Pupil wins right to challenge school in court over injury

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

A TEN-YEAR-OLD boy whose arm was broken when a fellow pupil gave him a "Chinese burn" won permission yesterday to take his school to the High Court over its failure to take action after the incident.

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was "utterly shattered" by the alleged assault in a lunch queue, his father said. But the head teacher and school governors had decided not to discipline the assailant because they considered the injury an accident.

Since returning to his primary school in Basingstoke, Hampshire, in January, the boy, known only as W, had been isolated from fellow pupils outside class. Although the school said this was for his own protection while the injury healed, the effect was to deny him the company of friends and prevent him joining in other activities.

Philip Engelman, representing the family in court, said the school had "closed its mind to this serious matter and the bullying that under-

lies it." Mr Justice Forbes gave the father leave to seek a judicial review of the school's action on his son's behalf.

The father, who had complained in the past about bullying and the lack of any policy to counter it, said after the hearing: "I have been accused of campaigning against the school, but I am only seeking justice for my son. I also want to protect the future safety of all children at the school."

Mr Engelman said W suffered a spiral fracture to his arm, which indicated that considerable force was used in the assault. His assailant had admitted: "I went and gave him a Chinese burn and he moved, then I heard it click."

W had been bullied previously in the lunchtime queue by the same boy to such an extent that he had decided to stop having school dinners and had only resumed so that he could be with his friends.

But the head teacher had been reluctant to take action, and had indicated shortly after the incident that he did not believe that any serious

assault had taken place. Mr Engelman said: "There has not been a serious investigation of the underlying facts, or serious consideration of the harm actually inflicted on the applicant by the other boy."

The police concluded that W's assailant may have been guilty of criminal assault but the boy's parents, on legal advice, had refused to accept a formal caution and there would be no prosecution.

In January, the governors decided no action would be taken against W's assailant over the "accident", and said they were satisfied with the school's anti-bullying policy. The chairman of governors had written to the father saying "a campaign against the good name" of the school and its head teacher would not be tolerated.

Outside court, Mr W said the incident constituted serious bullying, which required strong action. "My son is shattered by that [bullying] and the fact the school appear not to care. Now he is isolated. He, the victim, is being punished."



Just over a year ago her name was *Sea Empress* and she was a broken-backed wreck on the Welsh rocks, spilling 72,000 tonnes of oil into Milford Haven and causing massive pollution. Yesterday, renamed *Sea Spirit*, she was repaired and ready to go back to sea.

Disaster tanker to sail again

The repairs carried out by the yard cost about £20 million, used nearly 3,000 tonnes of steel, and are believed to be the biggest such job ever carried out.

The Norwegian vessel, owned by Acomarit, went aground off Milford Haven in February last year, creating

a 30-mile slick and causing heavy pollution along the Pembrokeshire coast. The salvage operation, impeded by bad weather, took several days to free the tanker from the rocks.

She was towed to Belfast two months later for an inspection to see if she could be

repaired. Last August the yard won the lucrative contract to fix the vessel against fierce international competition.

The job nearly did not happen — insurance underwriters were close to sending the 147,000 tonne tanker to the scrapyard.

"One side of the hull was very badly damaged and we know that it was virtually a complete write-off," said a spokesman for Harland and Wolff yesterday.

The ship is being handed back to the owners next week and it will be up to them to decide when to take her away. "We believe that it will stay in Belfast for a week or ten days, but it's ready to go," the spokesman said yesterday.

Boy, 12, is killed as he runs for school bus

By Gillian Bowditch, Scotland Correspondent

A BOY aged 12 was crushed to death under the wheels of his school bus yesterday as he ran to catch it.

The first-year pupil, who had finished classes for the day at Inverlorn Community High School in Livingston, West Lothian, was worried that he would miss the double-decker bus, which was turning in the school playground at 3.45pm. Fearing that he would be late home, the unnamed boy sprinted after the bus, waving to the driver, but as he caught up with it, he tripped and fell under the wheels.

The boy's classmates, who were on board the Lothian Regional Transport bus, saw the accident. An ambulance crew was quickly at the scene but the boy was already dead.

The school said: "Everyone is devastated. Many of the pupils had already left the school for the day but several children witnessed the accident and were extremely upset. There is a large turning area in front of the school where the accident occurred. Our thoughts are very much with the boy's family."

An investigation into the accident has been launched by the police and the local education authority.

Peter Burden, operations manager of Lothian Regional Transport, said details were not clear because the driver was badly shaken by the accident. He offered the company's sympathies to the boy's family.

End of term report says that most television regions could do better

By Alexandra Freen, Media Correspondent

THE Independent Television Commission's annual review released yesterday delivered the following verdicts on ITV regional companies:

Anglia: commended for regional drama series *Short Sharp Shots* and regional science programme *The Megadome*. Arts programme "less impressive".

Borders: evening news magazine *Lookaround* praised, as is *Innovators*, a regional science programme. Network religious programme *Blessed Are They* described as "moving and instructive".

Carlton: criticised for failing to ensure its programmes comply with programme codes — formal interventions from the ITC numbered eight compared to four in 1995. The station received two formal warnings last year. Regional programming of high quality, particularly the themed *Parenting Week*.

Central: regional drama series, *Family Values*, a failure.



David Jason as Frost: too much violence

Range and quality of other regional programming praised. Continued to be a major source of high quality children's and factual programmes to the network. Channel: *The Lottery Show*, based on Jersey's lottery, a failure. Other regional programming of a "high standard". Children's drama, *Island*, produced for the ITV network praised. Grampian: criticised for small shortfall in Gaelic programming.

ing. Efforts to attract younger viewers praised.

Granada: some lack of regional identity in regional programmes and an over-reliance on repeats. Amount, range and quality of network programmes "impressive". Particular praise for the costume drama *Moll Flanders*.

HTV: lack of resources evident in some regional programmes. Some regional programmes, such as *What's My Line*, criticised for their lack of regional identity.

London Weekend: a key provider of high quality network programmes, but continued efforts are needed to refresh entertainment and drama. Praised for attempt to introduce new comedy programmes with formats such as *Saturday Live*.

Meridian: criticised for shortfall in regional news, arts and entertainment. Number of programmes supplied to the network increased.

Scottish: as in previous years there were shortfalls in the amount of first-run material in some regional programmes, particularly documentaries. Amount of Gaelic programming was satisfactory, although too many broadcast after midnight.

Tyne Tees: concerns raised early in year about quality and diversity of regional programming, but the company responded positively. Contributions to the network increased.

UTV: no UTV programmes were accepted for network broadcast. Greater efforts must be made to win network commissions. Good for regional programmes.

Westcountry: strong, high quality regional programmes. Scored a major network success with *Christmas with the Royal Navy*.

Yorkshire: concerns raised early in the year about the quality and diversity of regional coverage in new magazine *Tonight*. Improvements made throughout the year. Continued progress must be sustained. Criticism of violence in two network programmes, *The Governor* and *A Touch of Frost*.

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Heart

Continued from page 1
developing the pump, we have designed the system to implant it," Mr Westaby said. "We are, therefore, well ahead of the Americans in this and will certainly be able to perform the operation first."

The secret of the Radcliffe system lies in the method of providing battery power. Earlier artificial devices relied on wires being threaded out of the body through the stomach wall for connection to the power supply. Because skin there is loose it is difficult to prevent wires moving and causing infection.

Under the Radcliffe system, the wire is fixed by a small plate screwed on to the skull. It is then connected to the lead from the battery, which is strapped in a pouch on the patient's chest.

"This ought to make it possible to treat many more patients with heart disease," Mr Westaby said. "Because of the shortage of donors for transplants only around 300 patients a year can be treated. This means only very ill people are usually considered for this kind of surgery."

"With the new pump, however, it will be possible to treat people at a much earlier stage and thus reduce the number of people with heart disease. By the time of the millennium this will be a standard procedure operation no rarer or more difficult than putting in a heart pacemaker."

The hospital's ethics committee has already been asked to give approval for the operation to go ahead and Mr Westaby says he has been told objections are unlikely.

Developing the system has cost the Radcliffe team £1 million, raised from sponsors, and will cost another £1 million before full clinical trials are completed and the operation is generally available.

Loyalist prisoners in protest at Maze

Loyalist inmates have begun a protest at the Maze prison because they say that they are being punished for an escape attempt by IRA prisoners last month. Members of the Ulster Volunteer Force are refusing to co-operate in daily head counts at the Belfast jail because they are not allowed to visit friends in other H-blocks, accompanied by prison officers.

The privilege has been withdrawn from all inmates while John Steele, director of security at the Northern Ireland Office, conducts an inquiry into the escape attempt. Other privileges, such as home leave, have been withdrawn only from IRA wings. Mr Steele will present his report by the end of the month.

PC may face retrial

A police officer charged with murdering a suspected car thief while on duty faces a retrial after an Old Bailey jury failed to agree on a verdict yesterday. PC Patrick Hodgson, 49, has denied murdering David Ewin near Hammersmith Bridge, southwest London, in April 1995. The jury was discharged.

Garter honour for Duke

The Queen has appointed the Duke of Gloucester, her cousin, to be a Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. The Duke, 52, joins the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Kent as royal knights of the most senior order of chivalry, founded 660 years ago next year. The announcement came by tradition on St George's Day.

Planners see the light

The Highways Agency has bowed to pressure from environmentalists and abandoned a scheme to light the M6 between junctions 16 and 19 in Cheshire when it is increased to eight lanes. The Council for the Protection of Rural England had claimed that the glare would intrude on the rural landscape.

Fugitive llama held

A llama that has been roaming wild in Cornwall for six months, eluding all attempts at recapture, was shot with a tranquilliser dart west of Torpoint, close to the smallholding from which it had escaped. Sightings of Sebastian dashing along roads or leaping over off hedges, sometimes with the police in pursuit, were regularly reported in the local press.



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Beetles show excellent taste by choosing £30m painting for snack

Detail of Caravaggio's *The Taking of Christ*

By AUDREY MAGER, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A MINATURE beetle with a taste for glue has infested a Caravaggio masterpiece in the Irish National Gallery.

A visitor to the Dublin gallery last week spotted an insect as she stood admiring *The Taking of Christ*, an Italian baroque painting considered by many to be Caravaggio's best work. She alerted a nearby guard, saying "You may think I am mad, but..."

Staff investigated and found an "infestation" of tiny insects eating the glue used in the 1993 restoration of the painting. Raymond Keaveney, the director of the gallery, said the flea-sized insects had picked the gallery's most treasured painting. "There are hundreds of paintings to choose from but for some reason it had to be our Caravaggio."



Biscuit beetle: art lover

17th-century Dutch artist Gerrit van Honthorst. In 1990 it was attributed to Caravaggio and restored. It is believed that the beetles were

attracted to the Caravaggio because the glue used to re-line it was organic-based, soft and easy to chew. They did not damage the original canvas.

Mr Keaveney said: "We spend all our time worrying about men in balaclavas coming in to steal our paintings and then you find this tiny thing wreaking havoc. In many ways they are a lot more destructive."

The biscuit beetle is not an uncommon pest in libraries and art galleries where mate-

rials are often very dry and easy to eat. Measuring up to 2.5mm in length, it is known by a number of names, including the bread beetle. In the US it is called the drug-store beetle. It is similar to the weevil. Red-brown in colour, it is indigenous to the British Isles and its Latin name is *Stegobium paniceum*. The adults are able to fly.

The biscuit beetle caused alarm in 1990 when it was found in a National Trust Library in Cornwall. It was found among the 5,000 rare

16th and 17th-century religious books in the library in Lanhydrock House near Bodmin. The beetles feed on the dried flour paste used in old books and on the leather bindings. The National Trust believed at the time that they had been carried into the library on cut flowers.

According to Lee Rogers, an entomologist at the Natural History Museum in London, they are voracious and libraries needed to be regularly cleaned and aired to deter them.

Transsexual denied legal role as father of partner's child

By FRANCES GIBB AND RUSSELL JENKINS

A TRANSSEXUAL who was born female yesterday lost a long court battle for legal recognition as the father of his partner's daughter.

In a test case that essentially confirms the British legal position that a man is defined by his chromosomes, the European Court of Human Rights dismissed by 10 votes to four a claim by Stephen Whittle, 41, that the British ruling denied his rights to family life.

Dr Whittle, a lecturer in law at Manchester Metropolitan University, underwent a sex change operation more than 20 years ago. He lives in Didsbury, south Manchester, with his partner of 18 years, Sarah Rutherford, and four children she conceived by artificial insemination by donor.

He said yesterday that he was disappointed at the failure of the test case, which would have brought Britain into line with most other Western European countries, which recognise sex change. Britain is almost alone in Europe and the rest of the common-law world in refusing to allow transsexuals to

marry and to grant them the legal rights which follow from that status.

Dr Whittle said: "It only affects about five or six thousand people in this country, but the legal situation is completely inequitable." But he remained proud of what he had achieved by changing his sex and living for eight years in what the court described as a "permanent and stable" relationship.

Ms Rutherford added: "We are both very upset by the decision. We are waiting for the outcome of other similar cases and hoping that they might be successful so we can try once again to put this right."

She had the first of her four children, who include twins, in 1992. The authorities would not register Dr Whittle as the father of the eldest child because he started life as a woman. Dr Whittle began the process of changing sex in his twenties before he met Ms Rutherford. He underwent a double mastectomy, hysterectomy and hormone treatment.

Dr Whittle has no legal status as father of the four-

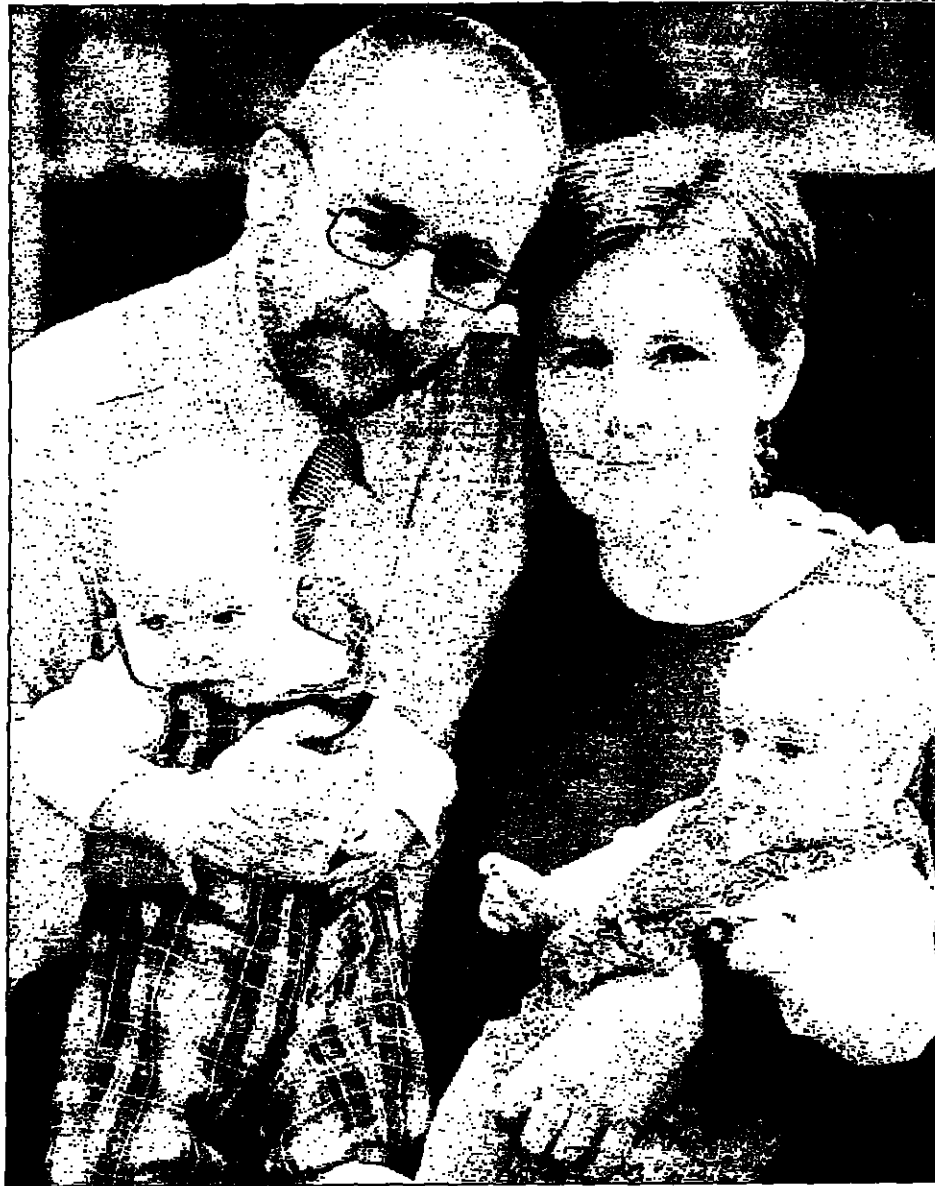
year-old girl, who was the only child born at the time he lodged his challenge. He is barred from entering his name on her birth certificate, where the space has been left blank, and consequently has no rights to be consulted about her health and education, and no automatic right to custody in the event of his partner's death.

The Strasbourg court held that because laws governing transsexuals in member states were in a process of change, it was inclined to give more discretion to the law in Britain.

The court's ruling is the latest in what seems to be a shift towards giving member states more autonomy in how they decide social issues. The British Government, led by Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, has been lobbying hard for such a shift.

Jonathan Cooper, legal director for Liberty, the human rights group, said: "This doctrine of allowing members states to decide such issues is a very dangerous doctrine."

Law Report, page 49



Dr Whittle with his partner Ms Rutherford and two of her four children

Identity disorder ignored in law



AS THE law stands, a person's gender is determined by their chromosomes. Physical appearances at birth may be confusing. Girls can be born looking anatomically more like a boy with undeveloped testes. Likewise boys can be mistaken for girls and children have been brought up according to their apparent sex rather than that determined by their chromosomes.

Incongruity between what is on the birth certificate and how the person views their own gender can lead to lasting unhappiness. The conviction that sex has been wrongly assigned is known as transsexualism. Either sex can suffer from gender identity disorders but the problem more often affects men. The man feels that nature has made a terrible mistake and is convinced that a completely female psyche is hidden beneath the disguise of a male physique.

The transsexual person, having established in their own minds from an early age, usually before puberty, that they are female in every way other than in terms of their chromosomes and physical

sexual characteristics, not unreasonably adopts a female role. The most obvious outward sign of gender is choice of clothes. Male transsexuals are unhappy in masculine clothes, and whenever they have the opportunity they wear women's garments. They do not obtain any more of a sexual thrill from dressing in feminine clothes than an ordinary man would from putting on his suit to go to the office. This is the essential difference between a transvestite and a transsexual.

As the transsexual reaches maturity, a change of clothes is no longer adequate and he or she seeks the attention of a plastic surgeon, whose attempts to alter the physique are supplemented by the prescription of hormones, which change the secondary sexual characteristics. Doctors can, in selected cases, do much to redress the unhappiness brought on by transsexualism but the chromosomes, and the law, are unalterable.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

Major accused of fiddling invoices for Army rations

By A STAFF REPORTER

A SENIOR army officer in charge of feeding British troops in Berlin took £100,000 in backhanders, a court was told yesterday.

Major John Ewart was said to have used bogus invoices and the help of two officials working for a British food company to inflate prices at a time when senior colleagues were preoccupied with running down the Army's presence in the city.

It was claimed that as a reward for his help the officer, then attached to Ordnance Corp, was handed brown envelopes containing tens of thousands of pounds.

Peter Caton, for the prosecution, told Southwark Crown Court that he could prove the officer had corruptly accepted £40,000 in backhanders but said it was the Crown's case he had taken well over £100,000.

"He was feathering his own nest," Mr Caton said. He added that while the money to feed the troops came from the German Government, that "should not blind us to the fact that someone was being screwed by — tragically — an officer in the British Army". The Germans had agreed to pay the cost of feeding the garrison after the Second World War in return for protection against the Cold War allies.

Major Ewart, 51, from Dilton Marsh, Wiltshire, denies seven charges of accepting corrupt payments between

November 1993 and June 1994 "in relation to his principal's — the Queen's — affairs".

Mr Caton told the jury: "He placed orders for the food for troops, agreed prices charged by the suppliers, Belvedere Foods Limited of Pangbourne, Berkshire, and authorised the authorities in Berlin to pay them. However, the contracts were being fiddled. Belvedere Foods paid out what it believed was commission but what in simple English were backhanders, £187,000 of which should never have been paid."

Major Ewart's superior officer at the time, Colonel Joseph Dunson, agreed with David Hughes, for the defence, that the British soldier could be "quite fussy" and preferred sausages imported from Britain.

The case continues.



Ewart allegedly took envelopes full of money

Beaten wife cleared of murdering husband

By LIN JENKINS

A WOMAN subjected to 25 years of domestic violence was cleared yesterday of murdering the husband she married twice. The jury decided Anne Coyle had not killed her husband by stabbing him with a kitchen knife when they argued over the preparation of supper but that he had died accidentally.

Mrs Coyle, 55, claimed she had inflicted only a scratch on her husband Ronald, a 54-year-old former RAF technician. She said he had fallen through a glass door during a fight and had asked her to call the emergency services.

The call was taped and he was heard shouting in the background: "She's stabbed me in the heart. I'm bleeding to death."

She said she believed he had died from a heart attack at their home in Heighington, Lincolnshire.

Mrs Coyle had denied murder and an alternative charge of manslaughter. Lincoln Crown Court was told that when she told her husband that she was expecting their third child, he had thrown her to the floor and kicked her. "I ended up in hospital and lost the baby."

She divorced him in 1986 but later remarried him, convinced that he had changed. On the night of their second marriage, he again attacked her and she was admitted to hospital with head injuries.

Boutique wins damages over clothes that lost exclusive tag

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE couturier Valentino has been ordered to pay £11,000 damages to a boutique owner for breaking an agreement to supply clothes exclusively.

When Holley Martlew agreed to sell Valentino's dresses at her shop, Ballroom, in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, she was told hers would be the only outlet in the county, Gloucester County Court was told.

Just after ordering dresses from the 1995 spring and summer collection, she discovered that identical clothes were being supplied to Hoopers, a department store less than a mile from her

shop. Dr Martlew, an archaeologist and author, sold her stock at cut-price. "I had to get rid of them somehow," she said. "They were no use to me if they were not exclusive to my shop."

The court was told that Dr Martlew had decided in 1992 to stock Valentino at her boutique. She said she had signed a form giving her exclusive rights to sell the designs in 1993.

Sally Anne Radkiewicz, who made the deal with her, told the court she could not remember the agreement. When the form was produced in court, the top part had been

cut off. Dr Martlew taped a conversation with Mrs Radkiewicz after she had left the fashion company. The court was told. During the conversation Mrs Radkiewicz said that she had offered Valentino's clothes to only one shop in each town.

John Greenwood, the Recorder, ordered Valentino to pay damages plus costs to Dr Martlew, who has accepted a £6,300 claim by the couturier for goods supplied. Mr Greenwood said: "Clearly there was agreement giving the exclusive right to sell Valentino products in Cheltenham and that was breached."

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HOUSE STYLE

Phone home and ask the oven to cook dinner

32 pages on the space-age homes of the new millennium



Saturday in THE TIMES

'He said I wanted him dead to get his money'

Man who left RSPCA £8m accused wife of infidelity

By A STAFF REPORTER

AN ELDERLY widow who is fighting to prevent her late husband's £8 million estate going to the RSPCA was accused by him of having affairs with young gigolos when she was in her seventies.

The High Court in Hong Kong, where she has launched a legal action, was told that Leon Richardson, a businessman and financial commentator, rewrote his will nine days before dying of a heart attack in the colony aged 77 in 1995. He had claimed that his wife Margie, now also 77, to whom he was married for 40 years, cheated on him after a heart attack left him impotent.

In a letter he wrote to a friend in 1994 after the couple had separated he said: "It's hell to be treated this way after I spent 40 years trying to give her a good life."

In April 1995 Mr Richardson, a dog lover, cut his wife out of the will and left his estate to the RSPCA.

The court was told that Mrs



Richardson: dog lover

Richardson had described her "living hell" to William Green, a psychiatrist, in late 1994, saying that her husband had suffered a personality change after a holiday to Cuba in August that year. "He had always been patient and kind but he became angry and attacked everything I said," Mrs Richardson told the court. "He said I was a drug addict. He accused me of having sex with other men. I

am so old it would be laughable if it were not so serious."

She said her husband had accused her of having flings while he was away on business trips and when he was held hostage for 100 days by rebels in Guatemala in 1981. "I have never looked at another man since I met Don [her nickname for him], she told Dr Green. "He said I wanted to steal his money and I wanted him dead to get it quicker. He said I was evil and in league with the devil and I must be a witch. At first I told him he was losing his mind. Then I realised it would do no good. All I could do was cry and walk away."

John Scott, QC, for Mrs Richardson, read letters that the businessman had written to friends and relatives in late 1994 accusing his wife of plotting with her daughter Rebecca to have him murdered. In one he said that he had survived three attempts on his life, once diving into a crowd to dodge bullets. Mr

Scott said Mr Richardson once accused his wife of planning to poison him.

Earlier Mr Scott read gushing, romantic letters that had been penned by Mr Richardson to his wife during their marriage, some written only weeks before the allegations started in 1994.

Mr Richardson, an American, started his working life with a Hollywood film project, then worked on the atomic bomb project. After emigrating to Australia he started a huge industrial business, spent eight years in Mexico and finally settled in Hong Kong.

His widow, who is now confined to a wheelchair, will give evidence at the trial later this week.

If Mrs Richardson fails to overturn her late husband's will, the RSPCA will receive what the charity believes would be its biggest legacy, enough to run one of its animal hospitals for eight years. The charity's costs are some £40 million a year.



Margie Richardson, in a wheelchair, outside the High Court in Hong Kong

Tolkien epic lords it again over readers

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

TOLKIEN'S epic fantasy *The Lord of the Rings* has been voted readers' favourite book of all time, beating Austen, Dickens and even Shakespeare. The survey by the Folio Society asked people to nominate books that had most influenced them.

The Bible was relegated to thirty-fifth place in the list of 50. The society, a leading publisher of illustrated editions in fine bindings, sent questionnaires to its 50,000 book-buying members. About 10,000 responded.

Tolkien's world of elves, dwarves and old magic, published in 1954, also topped an extensive poll conducted by Waterstone's, the booksellers, in January focus-

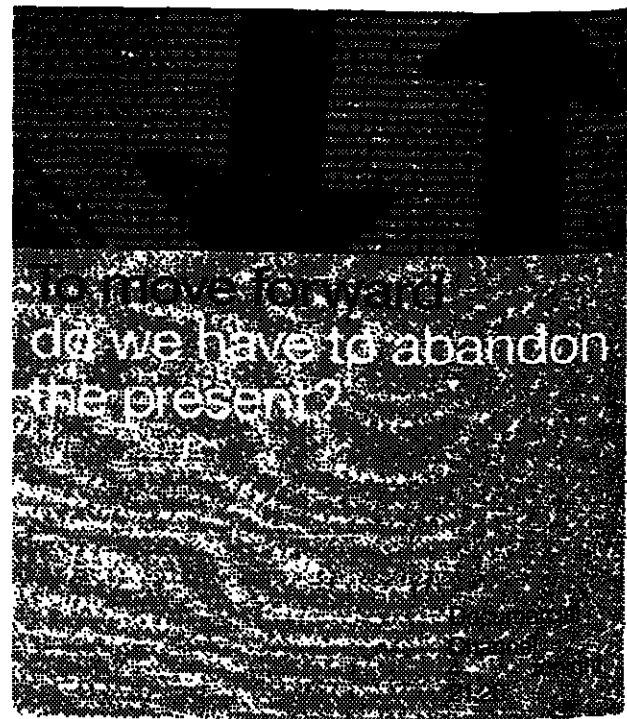
ing on 20th-century books. The latest survey did not limit readers to any period.

The society published its illustrated edition in 1977, despite the author's opposition to any visual representation of his work. The illustrator was Ingahild Grathner — a pseudonym for Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. Tolkien was so taken with some sketches she had sent to him, he changed his mind.

Ross Shimmom, chief executive of the Library Association, said: "It's astonishing that *The Lord of the Rings* has this impact. The idea of a parallel world... I wonder whether it's something to do with trying to make sense of the world that around us."

THE FOLIO FIFTY

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 The Lord of the Rings | J.R.R. Tolkien | 29 Robinson Crusoe | Daniel Defoe |
| 2 Pride and Prejudice | Jane Austen | 30 Barchester Towers | Anthony Trollope |
| 3 David Copperfield | Charles Dickens | 31 The Hunchback of Notre Dame | Victor Hugo |
| 4 Complete Works | William Shakespeare | 32 Diaries | Samuel Pepys |
| 5 War and Peace | Leo Tolstoy | 33 The Grapes of Wrath | John Steinbeck |
| 6 The Wind in the Willows | Kenneth Grahame | 34 Don Quixote | Miguel de Cervantes |
| 7 Middlemarch | George Eliot | 35 The Bible | |
| 8 Animal Farm | George Orwell | 36 Madame Bovary | Gustave Flaubert |
| 9 Tess of the D'Urbervilles | Thomas Hardy | 37 The Wit of Oscar Wilde | |
| 10 The Jungle Book | Rudyard Kipling | 38 Heart of Darkness | Joseph Conrad |
| 11 I, Claudius | Robert Graves | 39 Vanity Fair | William Makepeace Thackeray |
| 12 Canterbury Tales | Geoffrey Chaucer | 40 The Plums of P.G. Woodhouse | |
| 13 Treasure Island | Robert Louis Stevenson | 41 Gulliver's Travels | Jonathan Swift |
| 14 Ulysses | James Joyce | 42 To Kill a Mockingbird | Harper Lee |
| 15 Jane Eyre | Charlotte Brontë | 43 Brave New World | Aldous Huxley |
| 16 Wuthering Heights | Emily Brontë | 44 Short Stories | Ernest Hemingway |
| 17 The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn | Mark Twain | 45 Rebecca | Daphne du Maurier |
| 18 Alice's Adventures in Wonderland | Lewis Carroll | 46 Under Milk Wood | Dylan Thomas |
| 19 Sherlock Holmes Selected Stories | Sir Arthur Conan Doyle | 47 Fairy Tales | Hans Andersen |
| 20 The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire | Edward Gibbon | 48 Tom Jones | Henry Fielding |
| 21 Dante's Inferno | Dante Alighieri | 49 Three Men in a Boat | Jerome K. Jerome |
| 22 Brideshead Revisited | Evelyn Waugh | 50 The Folio Book of Short Novels | |
| 23 Cold Comfort Farm | Stella Gibbons | | |
| 24 The Life of Samuel Johnson | James Boswell | | |
| 25 Selected Poems | W.B. Yeats | | |
| 26 The Iliad | Homer | | |
| 27 Moby Dick | Herman Melville | | |
| 28 Crime and Punishment | Fyodor Dostoyevsky | | |



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Porpoise at r

Conservationists at public inquiry oppose £45m expansion of MoD's ranges in Northumberland

Army big guns threaten peace of national park

By PAUL WILKINSON

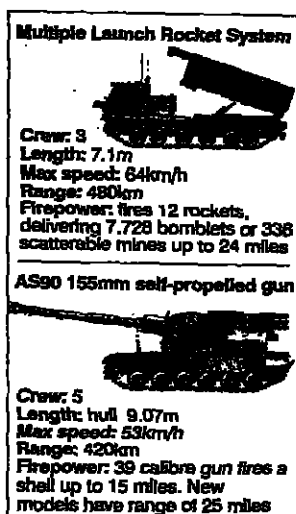
CONTROVERSIAL plans by the Army for a £45 million expansion of its training area in the heart of the Northumberland National Park went before a public inquiry yesterday.

Nigel Macleod, QC, for the Ministry of Defence, said it was "almost inevitable" that the Army would need to train troops on big guns in a wilderness area and that such an area would be "environmentally attractive and valued by many".

The AS90 gun and the multi-launch rocket system (MLRS), which the Army wants to operate on its ranges at Otterburn inside the park, were capable of firing over many miles and, with the use of live ammunition, it was essential that training should be in places with no risk of injury to the public.

Northumberland County Council and the national park committee oppose the project, which will involve building a mile of new road, improving 30 miles of existing roads and tracks, setting up more tactical and observation points and building a central maintenance depot and barracks for 125 soldiers. The MoD also wants to construct 46 "gun spurs" — hard-standings without which the 45-ton AS90 would sink into the peat.

Conservationists reject the argument that, with the ending of the Cold War and the



Multiple Launch Rocket System
Crew: 3
Length: 7.1m
Max speed: 84km/h
Range: 480km
Firepower: fires 12 rockets, delivering 7,728 bomblets or 336 scatterable mines up to 24 miles

AS90 155mm self-propelled gun
Crew: 5
Length: 9.07m
Max speed: 85km/h
Range: 420km
Firepower: 39 calibre gun fires a shell up to 15 miles. New models have range of 25 miles

withdrawal of troops from Germany, the only place where the Army can train adequately is Otterburn. They say the expansion would irreparably damage the landscape. Graham Taylor, the park's senior officer, said the development was a "substantial erosion" of what national parks were supposed to be about: conserving the landscape and promoting public enjoyment. Rights of way across the ranges are already closed on about 300 days a year.

The 58,000-acre Otterburn range occupies about a quarter of the park and covers ten Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 11 Sites of Special Nature Conservation Interest, including the habitats of merlins,

black grouse and ring ouzel. There are also 300 significant archaeological sites, including 30 sites permanently off-limits to troops. The range includes 39 working farms, 25,000 sheep and 1,000 cattle.

The inquiry, which opened yesterday in a hotel at Newcastle airport, is costing an estimated £3 million. The investigation by Peter McMaster, an inspector appointed by the Environment Department, is expected to run well into the autumn.

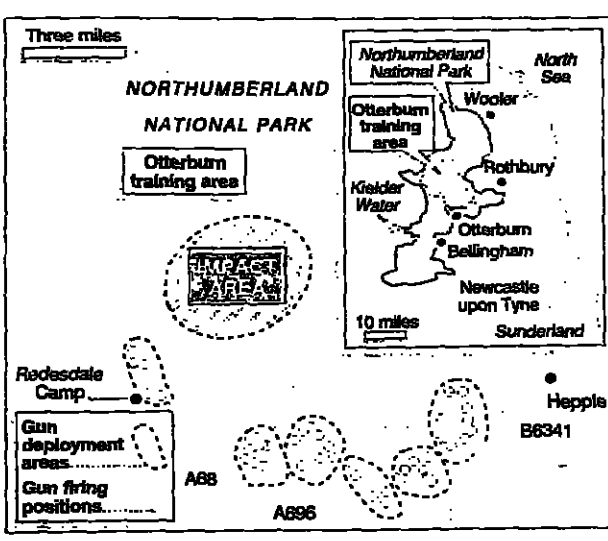
The ranges date from 1911 when Lord Redesdale sold them to the War Ministry after a grouse shooting trip with Winston Churchill, then a junior minister. The national park was created in 1956.

The Army has most of the local civilian population on its side. Lorrimer Farrell, a retired clerk and longstanding Otterburn villager, heads the Association of Rural Communities, which claims 90 per cent support for the expansion among the local population of about 1,900. He sees a plot by the park's controlling committee and the environmentalists to eject the MoD completely. "But they fail to realise that the environment has been successfully managed here for the last 85 years."

The MoD owns some 600,000 acres of land, including 15 per cent of Dartmoor National Park and large tracts of Salisbury Plain. There are 206 Sites of Special Scientific Interest on its land.



Troops on exercise, above, and a rocket test, below, at the Ministry of Defence's firing ranges at Otterburn in the Northumberland National Park



Porpoise 'at risk of extinction' in Celtic Sea

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

FISHING nets may be killing more than 2,000 harbour porpoises a year in the Celtic Sea, raising fears of extinction in the area.

Sixty per cent of the harbour porpoises found dead around England and Wales last year had been entangled in fishing gear, compared with 25 per cent in 1990, according to a government-backed survey. A study of

fishing boats in the Celtic Sea indicated that about 6 per cent of the population, approximately 2,300, were being caught and killed in nets there each year.

Mark Simmonds, of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, said that the internationally recognised alarm level was 1 per cent of a population being killed by fishermen. "More than 6 per cent or 2,000 animals a year is way above that. We believe that the species will become regionally extinct in the Celtic Sea unless urgent

action is taken," Paul Jepson, of the Institute of Zoology in London, said. "The harbour porpoise is slow to reproduce. At this rate, the population will go into decline."

The findings came from studies by Dr Jepson, funded by the Environment Department, and by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, backed by the European Union. The trust's findings are to be published in the *International Journal of Marine Sciences*. The animals are believed to be victims of

bottom-set gill nets, which are up to ten miles long and are anchored to the seabed for up to 20 hours.

In summer 1995 the trust's volunteer observers spent 300 days at sea on 20 Irish and Cornish boats in the Celtic Sea, which stretches from the southern tip of Ireland to north Cornwall. They counted 43 dead harbour porpoises in nets, which equated to 2,300 for the whole fleet in the area. The trust said more corpses may have been washed away.

Nitrate linked to diabetes

By NIGEL HAWKES

DOCTORS in Leeds have found evidence suggesting a link between the levels of nitrate in drinking water and childhood diabetes.

In rural areas where nitrate levels are up to four times higher, diabetes is 25 per cent more common, Dr Tricia McKinney of Leeds University and Dr Jonathan Bodansky

of Leeds General Infirmary report. Their samples, from Yorkshire, did not exceed EU nitrate guidelines.

Dr McKinney says the results, published in *Diabetologia*, suggest a link but further studies would be needed to prove it. Increased nitrate levels are largely caused by fertiliser.

Since a register was set up in Yorkshire in 1978, more

than 2,000 children have been diagnosed with the disease. Fewer than one in ten has a relative with diabetes so environmental rather than genetic causes are suspected.

In a study in the journal *Epidemiology*, diabetes has been found to be three times more likely than average among American Vietnam War veterans exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange.

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BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

BY OUR RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

Brother Harold needs a new chapel for pilgrims

Brother Harold, a former mathematics teacher, was attracted to the religious life while studying in Durham. His desire was to recapture the pre-Reformation spirit of contemplation as practised by Northumbrian saints such as *Cuthbert and Bede*.

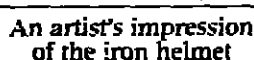
Sonia Woolley, who appeared in BBC's *Casualty* for two years, is a consultant to Sarum College in the Salisbury diocese, the College of Preachers and others on the presentation and delivery of sermons. She said: "With most preachers, the problem is confidence. They are afraid to be themselves. And unless they are themselves, what they say will not come over as honest."

□ *The Times Best Sermons of 1990*, a collection of the 30 shortlisted sermons from last year's Preacher of the Year award, is published by Cassell (£9.99).



BY NORMAN HAMMOND
ARCHAEOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

The find is the culmination of 18 months' work carried out by Mr Meadows's team. The roadside site was first studied after the remains were discovered of an 18-acre Roman vineyard capable of producing 15,000 bottles of white



wine a year. "It was the first proof of Roman viticulture in Britain, which was exciting enough," Mr Meadows said. "But to find an Anglo-Saxon helmet of this significance within such a relatively short period of time was a huge reward."

The new find has been called the Pioneer Helmet, after Pioneer Aggregates, the gravel company on whose land it was found and which is meeting the costs of conservation. The helmet has a nose guard, crescent-shaped cheek-guards and a domed cap surmounted by a crest in the shape of a boar.

Similar helmets were recovered from Bentv Grange, Derbyshire, in 1861, Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, in 1939, and

The findings will be placed on public display after two months of conservation work by specialists at the Museum Services conservation laboratory in Leicester. The exact location of the site will remain a secret while further excavations are carried out.

A couple were rescued from a loft after an estate agent accidentally locked them in. They smashed a window of the flat in Birmingham and called for help. The woman was brought down on a hydraulic fire platform because she was too scared to use a ladder.

Assistant Divisional Fire Officer Mike Murray of Humberstone Fire Service said Mr Ralph had survived because he was bending over. "He appears to have been either putting his socks on, pulling up his undies or drying his toes, and most of the blast missed him. Bending over potentially saved his life."

Cats suffer
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

MEET TONY BLAIR

Friday is your chance to ask Tony Blair about his party's plans for government should Labour win the election. This is a unique opportunity for readers of The Times and The Sunday Times to have a say in the campaign with the man who will be prime minister.

Tony Blair will speak for about 20 minutes before answering questions from the audience. The event, to be held in London on Friday, April 25, will take place from 6pm to 9.30pm. Tickets are free to book.

Cats suffer more cruelty as man's new best friend

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

CRUELTY to cats is rising sharply with their increasing popularity, according to the biggest animal welfare charity. They are now Britain's most common pets.

The number of owners convicted of cruelty went up by 27 per cent last year, rising to 235 from 185 in 1995, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said yesterday. Some 21,000 sick, injured or abandoned cats were rescued by the charity.

Dogs, the second most popular pets, remained the most common victims of cruelty. Last year there were 892 convictions for canine cruelty. The rise from 766 cases in 1995 was an increase of 16 per cent. One cat owner shut his pet in a freezing basket and threw it into a freezing canal because he could not stand its constant meowing. Police found it alive after 45 minutes in the water but it died later. Thames magistrates gave the owner a conditional discharge.

Another cat was abandoned with a broken leg because its owner did not want to pay for treatment. The cat was res-



Safe: Poppet the collie with new owner Lizzi Angrade

cued but the toes on its injured leg, which became infected, had to be amputated. The owner was fined £50 but she will not have to start paying by instalments until 2002.

Not all brutality to cats is by owners. A tabby lay trapped in an illegal gin trap for three days before being found by its owner. Sheila Morrow took Tessa to a vet with the razor-sharp trap locked on to its fractured front leg, which was amputated.

"It is shocking that cat cruelty has risen so sharply," Richard Davies, chief officer

of the RSPCA inspectorate, said. "Many cases cannot be brought to prosecution because it is impossible to trace the owners. It is particularly galling that when someone is convicted of cruelty they are often allowed to go and get another pet because the court has failed to ban them from keeping animals."

One in four people found guilty of cruelty is still allowed to keep pets. John Rolls, the RSPCA's director of communications, said: "We are continuing to campaign for an automatic ban on keeping

animals for anyone convicted of a cruelty offence." Anne Fuller, chairman of the Magistrates' Association, said that an automatic ban, similar to the driving ban for drink-driving, would need a change in the law and would be draconian.

The number of domestic cats drew level with dogs four years ago, reaching seven million. By last year it had risen to 7.7 million, while the number of dogs has remained static. Charlotte Morrissey, an RSPCA spokeswoman said: "More and more people seem to be switching to cats because they are seen as convenience pets which can be left at home while the owner is out to work and, wrongly, as needing less care and attention than dogs."

Cruelty to dogs continues. Poppet, a six-month-old border collie, was found tied up in a backyard at Banbury, Oxfordshire, with a fractured leg and burns to 50 per cent of its body caused by chip fat. It made a full recovery and is being kept by Lizzi Angrade, the veterinary nurse who found it. The original owner was banned from keeping pets for life.



Sheila Morrow with her pet Tessa, which she rescued from a gin trap. The cat had to have a leg amputated

Anonymous letter gives clue to girl's killer

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

AN ANONYMOUS letter giving information about the murder of 16-year-old Claire Tiltman in 1993 has been received by her father. Detectives hunting the killer of the schoolgirl, who was stabbed in an alley near her home in Greenhithe, Kent, appealed yesterday for the writer to come forward.

The letter was postmarked Dartford and sent to Geoff Tiltman at the Royal British Legion in Greenhithe, where he is a member. It arrived in January, shortly before the fourth anniversary of his daughter's death. Police said it betrayed intimate knowledge about the stabbing and the movements of an individual on the night of her murder.

Detective Superintendent Nick Biddiss said: "What has been written, if it is true, will be something that I am confident will lead to the arrest and charge of the person responsible for the murder."

Mr Tiltman said: "This letter could lead to the capture of Claire's killer. I would appeal for the person who wrote it to come forward."

Detectives, who declined to go into details about the letter's contents, said that no individual was named.

Feline fine after 250 miles in suitcase

By ROBIN YOUNG

WHEN Clara Kent unpacked her suitcase at her holiday hotel she found a stowaway inside. Her cat, Tessa, had crept in among her husband's clothes and Lester Kent, 70, a pig farmer, had shut the case, measuring 24 in by 18 in, without realising the pet was asleep inside.

When the couple loaded their cases into Mr Kent's car at Mells, near Halesworth, Suffolk, they were concerned that they could not see Tessa, but left a note for Mr Kent's daughter, Gwen Woolner, 40, who lives near by and was due to look after the cat.

They then drove 20 miles to Mendlesham, Suffolk, where they boarded a coach to Wales. Mr Kent's case with Tessa inside was in the hold for the 250-mile journey to Bullth Wells, Powys. Mrs Kent, 69, discovered her pet only when she unpacked. She then telephoned Mrs Woolner who had been searching for Tessa all day.

The management at the Greyhound Hotel agreed to let Tessa stay in the couple's en suite bathroom for their two-night break and the Kents bought a wire cage to carry Tessa home in relative comfort on a seat beside them.

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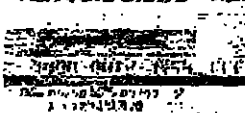
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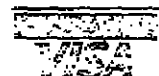
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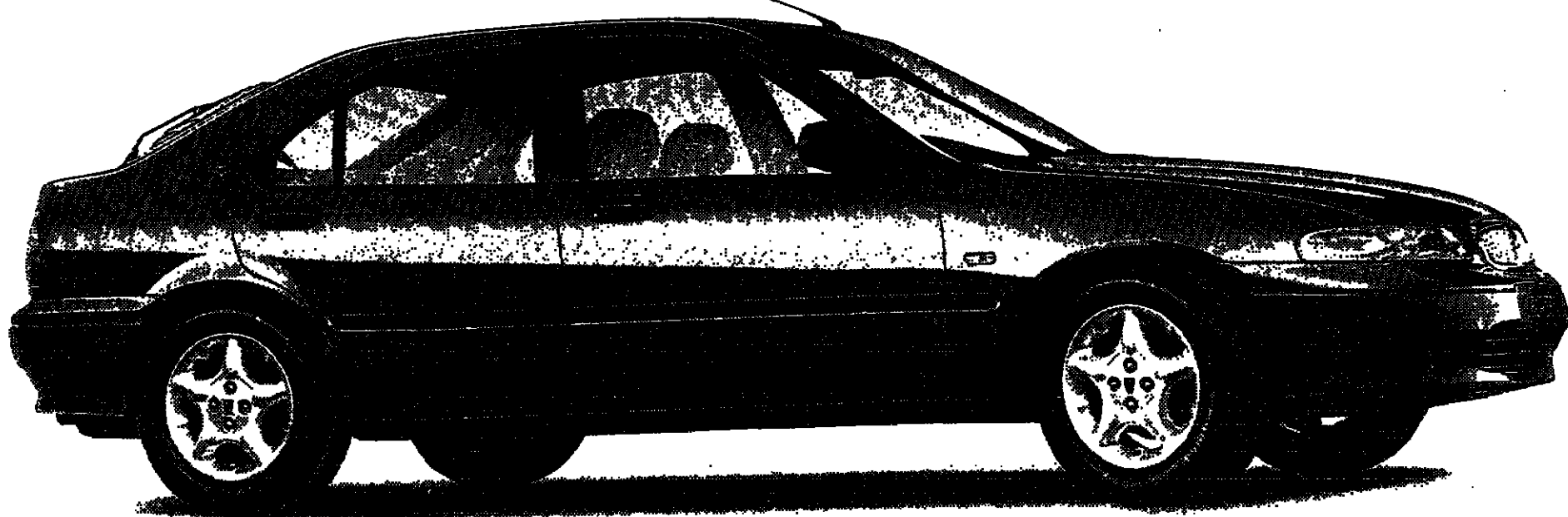
Friday is your chance to ask Tony Blair about his party's plans for government should Labour win the election.

This is a unique opportunity for readers of The Times and The Sunday Times to have a say in the campaign with the man who aims to be prime minister

Tony Blair will speak for about 20 minutes before answering questions from the audience. The event, to be held in central London on Friday, April 25, will take place between 8pm and 9.30pm. Tickets, which must be booked in advance, are £10 each (£7.50 for students, pensioners and unemployed). Telephone First Call on 0171-420 0000. Lines are open 24 hours.

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Cook mixes old Labour spice into Blair's new recipe

ROBIN COOK, the man who expects within a couple of weeks to become Foreign Secretary, was struggling with the zip on a bright red jacket that was a couple of sizes too big. With his red hair, he looked more than ever like one of Father Christmas's helpers.

But Mr Cook was not worried by the potentially wicked photo-opportunity yesterday in the Yorkshire workshop of a booming maker of foul-weather gear. "Barbara Follett would approve," he remarked of Labour's arbiter of style. He would, he said, wear the jacket on his first trip to Europe as Foreign Secretary.

Mr Cook's neglect of new Labour's style rules matches the leeway that he has earned for his old-Labour allegiances within the Tony Blair circle. Somehow the Labour candidate for Livingston manages to exude the new improved message while still tasting of the classic flavour, from trade union sympathy to European policy.

"I know there are many people in the grassroots of the party who identify me with their values," he said in the back of his car as he drove through west Yorkshire yesterday. "I understand that I represent these values within the collective leadership. Having me there in the collective leadership greatly strengthens Tony's position."

Impeccably loyal in his utterances, Mr Cook, 51, has been waging one of his party's most energetic campaigns and, as spokesman on Europe, he is, as he says, "in the thick of it". Over the past week this has largely meant potshots at the Tories' flailing ducks.

Yesterday's typical day began in Aberdeen, included stops in Leeds, Huddersfield and Batley and ended with appearances in Edinburgh. Four television interviews were also slotted in. The exhausting timetable and mobile phone juggling means the occasional slip, such as his

Robin Cook is a man of impeccable loyalty, but he gives the impression that his allegiances are more to John Smith than to Tony Blair, writes Charles Bremner



congratulations to a Yorkshire seamstress yesterday for being the "best in Lancashire".

Motivation and the odd evening malt whisky were keeping him going, he said. "I have been in opposition 18 years... I have seen too many injustices in my constituency from the party in power. I am determined this time we are going to score for the people we represent."

Occasionally old allegiances slip through. Mr Cook reacts sharply when someone suggests that the late John Smith might not have managed to win this election. The Shadow Foreign Secretary, who managed Mr Smith's campaign for the leadership, was sure that he would have done. Mr Blair was clearly in mind when he volunteered the thought that trust was an issue in this election. "I don't think anybody would have ever challenged John on that front. Different people have different styles of leadership."

Campaigning yesterday,



Cook identified with an older message

Mr Cook was buoyed by the ovation he had just been given by the gathering of the Scottish TUC, a show of support that sharpened talk of him as a future Scottish prime minister in a devolved kingdom. "The reception was immensely encouraging," he said in tones that sounded remarkably like Malcolm Rifkind when he keeps his voice down.

"But I am standing for the Westminster Parliament. It would be presumptuous to engage in speculation about Scotland now." It was clear, however, that he rather fancies the idea.

On Europe, Mr Cook was in manifesto mode, fielding questions with the studied ambiguities of his party's policy. At a Leeds school, a girl asked if he favoured the single currency. His reply was a discourse on currency stability.

At the Hauberk foul-weather gear factory in Batley, Mr Cook was on the other end. "How do you feel about the single currency?" he asked Andrew Barlow, managing director. "I have no objection at all," he replied.

Asked the same question, Mr Cook talks of all the criteria that Labour would apply to decide whether it would be right for Britain and then quotes Mr Blair's line that membership at the outset would be "unlikely".

Mr Cook, who writes a racing column in a Scottish newspaper, says he is not betting on a Labour victory. But his talk suggests that confidence has got the better of all those warnings against complacency.

Follett is playing down the image she created

By Daniel McGrory

VIRTUALLY every photograph of Barbara Follett taken during this campaign has her looking furtive behind dark glasses as though she had just stepped from the dock of the Old Bailey.

The normally thrusting Mrs Follett is indignant at suggestions she has suddenly come over all coy and camera-shy as she courts Labour voters in marginal Stevenage.

"I haven't turned into a shrinking violet. It's just that having cameras around intimidate the voters and besides it's not my job to be the mouthpiece for new Labour."

Her public reticence has much to do with her sensitivity at how her many detractors demonise her as the architect of all that is synthetic about new Labour.

It was no accident that anti-abortion campaigners chose her constituency to promote its video for the election, as they regard her as their mortal enemy. Last year a 14-year-old schoolgirl, Emilia Klepacka, caught the headlines after refusing to accept a school prize from Mrs Follett in protest at her stance on abortion. Emilia claimed that Emily's List, Mrs Follett's organisation that supports women seeking to become Labour MPs, insists that members support a woman's right to choose abortion.

Mrs Follett is left bemused. "I am anti-abortion," she said. "I do not know anybody who is pro-abortion, but there is no point making women into criminals if they have to take this dreadful option." She added that she was amazed "that so often I seem to be the No 1 hate figure of new Labour".

As a consequence she is a rarity among Labour candidates in professing that she wants to put some distance between herself and the glorious leader. "I get labelled as



Barbara Follett in Stevenage yesterday: "So often I seem to be the No 1 hate figure of new Labour"

having created the image of new Labour when in fact I did all that grooming work under Neil Kinnock to smarten them up. This lot have smartened themselves up. Yes, I'm a friend of Tony's, but I want to win Stevenage because of who I am."

That said, she was up close to Tony Blair last night as he picked Stevenage for the biggest rally so far of his campaign. "Of course it helps. He is our biggest plus," she said.

Her day's campaign outfit is an immaculately cut two-piece black suit complemented by a minimum of jewelled accessories that suggest wealth rather than scream it. "Image is important, but only insofar as it makes whoever you're talking to listen to your message."

"I do get fed up as being portrayed as some flibbertigibbet who only cares about lipstick and making sure the photographer doesn't catch

me with scampi in my teeth," she said, carefully ensuring that all traces of her lunch-time salad were removed.

"I have been trivialised as some spoilt little rich girl. I have been trying to win a parliamentary seat for Labour since 1983 and I've always picked Tory seats because I like a fight."

Her adoptive constituents are intrigued by the sight of Barbie and Ken, her millionaire novelist husband, who

have acquired a picturesque white cottage with a red front door in the old town. She confesses that recently they have had those private "what if" conversations. She needs a 2.66 per cent swing to win this oldest of the new towns created to house Londoners bombed out by the Blitz.

"We talk about losing and, if it should happen, whether we should stay. I tell you Stevenage is part of us now. We are not going."

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Old fears force new Labour to put safety first

Tony Blair believes the public has still not completely forgotten Labour's horrors of the past — the "winter of discontent" and the bitter divisions of the early 1980s. Hence the party has no choice but to pursue a safety-first campaign strategy of reassurance. Only in government, Mr Blair thinks, will Labour be able finally to banish these self-inflicted wounds and create new bonds of trust with voters.



PETER RIDDELL

Labour leaders have been attacked by left-wing intellectuals for being too conformist. Roy Jenkins, an admirer of Mr Blair, has criticised a "me-tooist" campaign [by Labour] on Europe and Home Office policy and an over-cautious policy on tax. He urged a "greater degree of courageous radicalism".

Mr Blair and his advisers worry that "courageous radicalism" might reignite those fears they have spent past five years trying to dispel.

They remember how the shadow budget's promises on tax and spending unravelled in 1992. Hence, if Labour proposed a tax and spending package along the lines put forward by the Liberal Democrats — 1p on income tax to pay for education and earmarked taxes for health — it would quickly be torn apart during the campaign, such is the legacy of past mistrust. Labour's research shows that, among many voters, fears linger about the legacy of "old" Labour on tax and spending, the unions and extremism.

The priority is still to reassure, deliberately limiting expectations. This has been reflected in Mr Blair's stance on Europe. He has banged the patriotic drum over Labour's pursuit of the national interest. The sceptic rhetoric is intended to make the party electorally less vulnerable, but Mr Blair does not intend to follow a sceptic policy in office.

Joining a single currency in the first wave may virtually have been ruled out, but a deal is still possible at the Amsterdam summit. Labour disputes the Tory view that it has already given away its negotiating position by agreeing to sign the social chapter and the new employment chapter.

though this is mainly general intentions. On the contrary, Labour argues that because it is seeking less than the Tories at the summit — for instance, it does not want to reverse the 48-hour working directive — it has more room for manoeuvre on modest extensions to qualified majority voting on regional and environmental policy.

The Labour leader does not believe that other countries will press proposals to extend QMV on foreign policy and to bring defence policy under the European Union umbrella, both of which Labour opposes. Labour also rejects ideas for extending European Union competence over immigration and home affairs policies and thinks that Britain will be granted an exemption because it is an island.

The key is whether there is a flexibility clause, as sought by France and Germany. The danger, of course, is that the other 14 will use such a clause to move towards closer integration, leaving Britain on the outside.

Mr Blair believes that, by taking office for the first time in 18 years, Labour should be able to banish many of the past fears. A Labour government will, he hopes, demonstrate that it is competent, safe and can be trusted. It would then seek to build up a solid record of identifiable, though probably limited, achievements to create the background for a second election victory.

The unstated premise of this strategy is, of course, that the British electorate is instinctively conservative rather than radical.

'Blair: the Movie' on a TV near you

Philip Webster reports on the making of an election broadcast in which the spin doctors (almost) ceded control

TONY BLAIR allows the world into his kitchen and his innermost thoughts in what aides describe as a "ground-breaking" election broadcast to be shown tomorrow.

In what Labour's spin chiefs claim is one of their biggest but most successful gambles of the campaign, the "raw Tony Blair" is set to emerge in a ten-minute film by the acclaimed documentary-maker Molly Dineen.

As a result, the Blair who once thought politicians were a "pain in the backside", wanted to play football for Newcastle and has warned his children to expect a lot more homework when David Blunkett takes over the Education Department will be revealed.

He will be portrayed alongside the passionate Labour leader who wants to get to Downing Street to be a "galvanising force" driving through change to make things better, the man who compares his determination to improve education with Margaret Thatcher's crusade to reform the trade unions.

Asked by Labour's campaign managers to present the man behind the public image — "the unvarnished Tony Blair" — Dineen spent several weeks



Two shots from Molly Dineen's film of life with the Blairs: the Labour leader at table, left, and in the kitchen



talking to and filming Mr Blair playing football, on the tennis court, in his home, in the car and on the train as he travelled around the country.

Inevitably it will be dubbed "Blair: the Movie" and compared with the pioneering Hugh Hudson production on Neil Kinnock in the 1987 election. But where that broadcast was controlled and stylised, Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's leading image-makers, took

probably their biggest risk in handing over the task of presenting the private face of Mr Blair to Dineen, an outsider whose reputation for independence and reluctance to take political direction had preceded her.

The Blairs, who are famous for guarding their privacy, allowed Dineen, who wielded the camera, and a sound engineer into their home in Islington, north London. There Mr Blair is pictured

standing by the refrigerator talking about "all the rubbish" that politicians have to do as a shot is shown of him signing a Labour poster. "You have to keep a grip on yourself and hope that your humanity sees you through," he says.

He tells how he tried in vain to get his father to help him to get a trial with Newcastle United. He tells how he understood from his father why some people who had done well in life thought the Tory

party was for them, and the Labour Party was not. Asked by Dineen why he was not a Tory, he replies: "In the end you fulfil your ambitions better in a society where people have some sense of duty towards other people."

The Labour leader also tells how, when his father had a stroke when he was ten or 11, "all our lives changed"; and how, when his mother died when he was 21, a new sense of urgency came into his life

because it made him realise that life was short and he had to get on and do things.

Throughout he tells of his passion to change Britain for the better. He could not just sit in Downing Street. He would "galvanise" people to drive through change "to make things better".

Dineen believes she has succeeded in the film in liberating Mr Blair from the "manacles" in which most politicians are held. Dealing with the spin-doctors of new Labour has clearly been a challenging experience and it would be naive to suppose that the broadcast that reaches the screens tomorrow night is precisely what she would have come up with had there not been an election on.

Mr Mandelson said: "Exceptionally for an election broadcast, where we would normally have complete control, we gave Molly a lot of latitude. The version she presented us with is largely the version that will go out."

Dineen said of the media team: "They have in no way forced things in or out." She added that Mr Blair had been an excellent subject for a documentary.

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Labour: David Blunkett in Scotland; Derek Foster, Andrew Smith in South East; Robin Cook, Donald Dewar in North West; Gavin Strang in East; Alastair Darling in West Midlands.
Liberals: Paddy Ashdown in the West Country; Peter Thurnham, Simon Hughes in London; Shirley Williams, David Steel in the South West; Earl Russell in Berkshire.
On screens: Liberal Democrat election broadcast: ITV 6.45pm, C5 7.55pm, BBC1 9.50pm, BBC2 10.30pm, C4 11.30pm. Election Call: Radio 4 & BBC1 9am with Gordon Brown. News at Ten: Michael Brunson interviews Paddy Ashdown. Radio 5 Live: The A-Z of Elections: 8 for Spin-doctors.

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Callow Tories face Labour's middle-aged spread

NEW LABOUR is the party of the middle-aged candidate, while the Conservatives have a generation gap with far higher numbers of twenty and thirty-somethings standing for Parliament.

Figures released by the University of Bradford show that the Conservatives have nearly three times as many candidates born in the 1960s and 1970s than Labour. However, it also has twice as many born in the 1920s, slightly more born in the 1930s and the oldest candidate, Edward Heath, who is defending Old Bexley and Sidcup at the age of 80.

The average age of a Labour

The average age of MPs has fallen over the years, but the House of Commons remains a stronghold of the white, middle-class and middle-aged man, Joanna Bale writes

candidate is 47, the Liberal Democrats is 46 and the Conservatives is 45. Average ages of candidates in all parties has risen by about three years since 1979.

However, the average age of MPs has generally fallen over the years. In 1945 it was 48 for Conservatives, 50 for Labour and 51 for Liberals; in 1992, it was 48 for Conservatives, 49 for Labour and 45 for Liberal

Democrats. The trend holds true at the top. John Major is, at 54, the youngest Prime Minister this century, but if Tony Blair ousts him at 43, he will be the youngest since Henry Addington in 1801. Pitt the Younger was Britain's youngest Prime Minister at 24 years and 205 days in 1783.

Of 114 candidates under the age of 30, 53 (46.5 per cent) are Conservative, 34 are Liberal

Democrat (29.8 per cent) and 27 (23.7 per cent) are Labour. Explaining the differences, Professor Colin Mellors, of the University of Bradford's politics department, said: "In the Labour Party there has always been a tradition of candidates having to serve apprenticeships in trade unions or local government before they are selected, so they tend to be older."

"The Conservatives are more likely to use young people to fly the party flag in constituencies which are not winnable. How many will go on to become MPs remains to be seen."

An overwhelming number,

92 (80.7 per cent), of the under-30s are male. Of the 22 women, Labour has most, with nine, while the Liberal Democrats have eight and the Conservatives five.

However, most under-30s are unlikely to be elected. Only four candidates under 30 are defending seats for their party: Graham Brady, Conservative, in Altrincham and Sale West; Stephen Gallagher, Liberal Democrat, in Inverness East; Naim and Lochaber; Yvette Cooper, Labour, in Pontefract and Castleford; and Robert Buckland, Conservative, in Preseli Pembrokeshire.

On a modest Labour swing of 5 per cent, the Conservatives

would lose Preseli Pembrokeshire and two Labour candidates under 30 would gain Bolton West (Ruth Kelly) and Rochdale (Lorna Fitzsimons). Of the under-30s, only 20 have had experience as local councillors, with Conservatives coming out top with nine, the Liberal Democrats with six and Labour with five.

Of 378 candidates born in the 1960s and 1970s, 194 are Conservative (51.3 per cent), 110 are Liberal Democrat (29.1 per cent) and 74 are Labour (19.6 per cent). The average age of party membership is 62 for Conservatives and 45 for Labour.

Professor Mellors added:

"Tory MPs have always been younger than Labour, but the gap is narrowing. In 1955 it was six years, now it is only one."

"However, we will still have an essentially male, white, middle-class, middle-aged Parliament," he said. "One of the major changes will be the number of women, which will be over 100 for the first time. This is a dramatic change from 1979 when there were only 19 and 60 at the last election."

Figures compiled by Colin Mellors, Professor of Politics, and Darren Darcy, a researcher, at the University of Bradford.



Pitt the Younger: he was Prime Minister at 24

Student puts poll before her finals

BY POLLY NEWTON

AT THE age of 21, Ruth Berry is the youngest female candidate standing in the election. She is fighting Newcastle upon Tyne Central for the Liberal Democrats and attempting to combine an election battle with preparation for her finals in public policy at Newcastle University. Three weeks before polling day she will be taking her exams — assuming there is no big surprise in the seat being defended by Labour's Jim Cousins.

Miss Berry, whose father, Chris, is the Liberal Democrat candidate in Eastbourne, says the reaction among voters has generally been favourable, "even from those people one would expect to say, 'What the hell are you doing this for?'". Her argument on the stump is that Parliament needs more young voices, particularly female ones. "Mostly they say, 'Bonnie lass, go for it.'"

She decided to become the party's candidate after campaigning actively for the Lib Dems at the 1992 election. The only hostility she has encountered has come from other politicians. "I have had a couple of derogatory comments... but they are from people who wouldn't like me anyway because I'm from a different party."

The Lib Dems have been able to claim Parliament's youngest MP since 1987, when Matthew Taylor, now 34, won the Truro by-election. But his record will undoubtedly be beaten after the election, possibly by a fellow Lib Dem, Steve Gallagher, 29, looks likely to win Inverness



Ruth Berry, 21: the Liberal Democrat is the youngest woman candidate in the poll

East. Naim and Lochaber for the Lib Dems, and Lembit Opik, 31, is likely to become the party's MP for Montgomery. Michael Moore, 31, should inherit Sir David Steel's seat of Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale. Rachel Trethewey, 29, is fighting the safe Tory seat of Devon East but has already been

identified by the party leadership as a rising star. In total the Lib Dems have about 60 candidates aged 30 or under fighting this election. The largest age gap between two candidates is believed to be in Old Bexley and Sidcup, held by Sir Edward Heath, 80. His Lib Dem opponent is Ian King, 26. A

Lib Dem official said yesterday that the proliferation of younger candidates might help to attract the youth vote. "I think it reflects the way the party is, more than being good for its image. Young people are involved at every level, from activists to policymakers to the press office. It is an opportunity party."

Young priests of politics lack the world's wisdom

Anthony Howard regrets the trend towards the Westminster careerist

POLITICS has become an increasingly demanding taskmaster. The fact that the Conservatives are bleeding so many twenty and thirty-something candidates — more than twice as many as Labour — reflects the rise of the career politician. It is, after all, a trend that has been developing for some time.

Nearly 25 years ago the well-known journalist Nigel Lawson publicly declared that, if he failed to secure a candidature in a safe Tory seat before he was 40, he would put all thoughts of a parliamentary career behind him. (He made it by being selected for Blaby at the age of 39, but only by the skin of his teeth.)

The point that the future Chancellor was addressing is, however, a serious one. The days when figures such as Neville Chamberlain or even Stanley Baldwin could pursue full-time careers before entering the Commons at well past the age of 40 have gone for good.

So has the era when someone such as John Davies, the former Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, could be brought into the Commons and almost straight into the Cabinet — just as Ernest Bevin had been from the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1940. In the contemporary world, the boys and girls — feeling their own parliamentary trade union muscle — simply would not wear it.

Nowadays, politics, regardless of party, is seen as a vocation rather like the priesthood: to have any hope of being ordained as a minister



Butler became an MP at 26 but never secured the top post won by Chamberlain the latecomer

you need to have joined the Commons seminary at least by the age of 35 — and preferably, as all those bright young political researchers and apprentice spin-doctors realise only too well, younger than that.

There have always been two rival routes to the top in British politics — the inside track and the outside rails. The first is probably best personified in the career of R.A. Butler: an MP at 26, a junior minister at 29, in the Cabinet at 40 and then the long decades of waiting for the ultimate prize that never came.

By contrast, the alternative path to the summit is symbolised by the examples of two recent Labour leaders. Neil Kinnock and Tony Blair got into the Commons young — indeed, Kinnock was only two years older than "Rab" Butler. But the point about their careers lies not so much

in their success in getting to Westminster at an early age as in the use to which they each put that precocious start. Both bounded into the leadership of the Labour Party after barely more than a decade. Neither was much older than 40 and each had passed entrenched, more senior figures along the way. Theirs — rather than Rab's — promises to be the Westminster career pattern of the future — and, if all the talk about young William Hague is to be taken seriously, among the Tories just as much as in the case of the Labour Party.

Is that, though, necessarily, a good thing? It certainly involves some element of loss. The concept of the old Tory "knights of the shire" may (thanks largely to Sir Julian Critchley) have become a contemporary butt for merriment, but the truth is that — in their own age and time — they performed a useful function. In this country we deliberately rear civil servants just as though they were members of some brahmin caste. Selected by competitive examination at the age of 21 or 22, they spend the next 40 years leading secluded and largely cocooned lives as the essential administrators of society. They are — as the Cabinet diarist Dick Crossman recognised years ago — the modern equivalent of Platonic Guardians.

But do we really want to follow the same practice with the method by which we choose our politicians, making them also a race apart selected, if not at birth, then at least at the very edge of maturity?

There may be a case for regarding politics as so exacting a calling that it requires only single-minded devotees recruited at the outset of their professional lives but it is hard to see that it has much to do with representational democracy.

Decline in party membership shows rising disillusionment

THE system of party politics and campaigning is emerging as a big casualty of this dull campaign. Even the slight increase in Labour's individual membership cannot disguise the continuing, sharp decline in political participation in the country as a whole.

Analysis of the latest statistics from more than 200 constituencies indicates that the precipitate decline in local Conservative associations has continued unchecked. Between 1994 and 1996, membership dropped by a further 20 per cent to reach a postwar low of 400,000. That compares with 1.5 million when Margaret Thatcher became party leader in 1975, 1.2 million in 1982 and at least 600,000 at the time of the 1992 general election.

In the marginals being defended by the Tories, the constituency memberships have dropped to an average of 750 and seats such as Amber

A sharp fall in political participation throughout the country bodes ill for all parties, whoever should win the election, writes Michael Pinto-Duschinsky

Valley, Batley and Spen, Bedford, Bury North, Harlow, and Kingswood are among those with fewer than 300 members each. The Tories still have a larger corps of qualified constituency agents than their rivals, a total of 264, including 15 retired agents. However, that, too, represents a decline from 299 in 1992 and 359 when Mrs Thatcher came to power in 1979.

This is probably the first election in which the Labour Party's individual membership — 406,000 — has matched that of the Tories. In 1979, Tory membership was five times as big as Labour's. The

top Labour constituency, Ealing Southall, has 3,980 members. Other leading constituencies include Tony Blair's Sedgfield seat, Bethnal Green, Brighton Pavilion, Canningham North and Don Valley.

Constituencies in London and those with Asian populations have proved particularly fertile. The party's membership has reached the levels last seen during the Wilson Government of 1966-70. But it is far below the peak of a million reached in the 1950s.

The Liberal Democrats have struggled to reach 100,000 members, fewer than 200 a constituency. The party's top seats are North Devon

(823), Oxford West (783), North Cornwall (779) and Richmond Park (734).

Together, the main parties have less than a million members — two for every 100 electors — the lowest since the war. Moreover, Labour and the Liberal Democrats have felt obliged to introduce national computerised systems of recruitment. In effect, an increasing number of "members" have had little contact with their local parties. That helps to explain the increasingly centralised structure of power in the Labour Party.

Declining numbers and national party lists have gone hand in hand with static financial contributions from local parties to the centre. The national organisations have also found it harder to obtain funds from their institutional backers. The percentage of Conservative Central Office income derived from corporate contributions has dropped

CENTRAL PARTY FUNDS (£m)				
	Conservative		Labour	
	Income	Expend	Income	Expend
1992/3	11.5	13.7	12.4	10.2
1993/4	14.1	12.0	14.6	10.4
1994/5	15.3	13.3	14.6	13.4
1995/6	21.4	14.2	16.1	16.5
Total	62.3	53.2	57.6	50.5
Fundraising (included in total)	7.6	7.6	9.2	9.2

Includes fundraising costs and Short Money (Labour = £8.2). Excludes costs of 1992 general election

DECLINING TORY MEMBERSHIP			
	Average membership per seat		
	1969	1993	1995
Safe Conservative	4,700	1,500	1,200
Marginal Conservative	3,400	950	750
Marginal Labour	2,550	550	470
Safe Labour	1,350	200	180

from nearly 60 per cent in the 1970s to about 20 per cent. In 1995, the most recent year for which figures are available, about 60 per cent of Labour's national income,

apart from the Short Money (government part-funding of the political parties at Westminster), came from trade union political levies.

The figures show the rela-

tive quality of the Tory and Labour central finances in the first four years of the parliamentary cycle. Compared with the 1970s and 1980s, the trend in central party funding has been flat. There has not been in Britain the increase of political costs seen in the United States and in other Western democracies.

Corporate donations have remained relatively modest. Indeed, by far the largest single corporate donor is the relatively unknown Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust. The largest recipients of its £25 million in contributions since 1992 have been the Liberal Democrats.

The main change in political funding has not been the amount of money raised but its sources. Money from rich individuals has become ever more important for each of the three main parties.

Britain has been returning to the system of plutocratic

financing of election campaigns which declined at the time of the First World War. A feature of the new rich is that they are not driven solely by a desire for titles. They also wish to use contributions to affect the parties' policies. Rowntree's campaign for constitutional reform, the animal lobby's gifts to Labour and the deployment of funds to influence opinion within the Conservative Party both for and against the European Union are obvious examples.

The decline in party membership and activity bodes ill for politics in the forthcoming Parliament no matter who becomes Prime Minister. It will be difficult to rid politics of disillusion and of the perception of sleaze unless the atrophy of local party organisation and activity is checked.

Michael Pinto-Duschinsky is senior lecturer in government at Brunel University.

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Santer unbowed by furious reaction to Eurosceptic attack

FROM MICHAEL DYNES IN BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS insisted yesterday that Jacques Santer's attack on Euroscepticism had not been an attempt to interfere in the general election campaign.

Nikolaus van der Pas, the European Commission's senior spokesman, said that Mr Santer had merely wanted to stem the increasing "pessimism and scepticism" across Europe. It was not an attack on Britain, he said.

Mr Santer, President of the Commission, spoke out on Monday against Eurosceptic "doom merchants" and their "unjustified and misplaced" criticism of European integration. He also complained about their failure to acknowledge the European Union's achievements.

Mr van der Pas said that the President did not regret his comments, but had been dismayed by the reaction in Britain. "We regret that it has become a party political and electoral issue," he said. "It is

not our intention to interfere in national elections or campaigns.

The President's speeches should receive wide attention. But this went beyond all my expectations. With hindsight, we are all much more intelligent."

Some commission officials admitted privately that they had been dismayed by the timing, if not the content, of Mr Santer's speech. It was delivered in English to the Dutch Association of European Journalists in Amsterdam. "No British member of the Commission's staff was given advance warning of what Mr Santer intended to say," one source said. "We have been sent reeling by the reaction in the British media."

"Mr Santer's speech has given the pro- and anti-European camps in the British election a rallying point. It was the last thing anyone here wanted."

The source said that Mr

Santer's decision to delete a critical reference to the Conservative election poster that depicted Tony Blair as a puppet sitting on the knee of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, was an indication that he was aware of the sensitive nature of his speech. "Had we known what was coming, we might have been able to highlight the consequences," he added.

"It is only the British members of the Commission who are aware of the current row," the source said. "It is all going on between London and Brussels. No other country is even aware of it. I know the popular press called Mr Santer a 'pipsqueak', but no one here knows what that means. Besides, they had called him much worse things in the past."

Sir Leon Brittan, Vice-President of the Commission, yesterday attempted to calm the controversy by disclosing that the speech had been arranged long before the date of the general election had been fixed.

Sir Leon emphasised that Mr Santer had been addressing Eurosceptics throughout the EU. He said that the speech had contained favourable comments about Britain, such as its demand for reform of the common agricultural policy, its support of EU expansion in the East, and its advocacy of market economics.

Sir Leon said that British politicians could not endlessly criticise the Commission and then accuse it of hitting below the belt when it defended itself.

Despite being inundated with requests for interviews from the British media, the Commission President failed to appear yesterday. His beleaguered staff said "his diary is full".

Simon Jenkins, page 20
Letters, page 21



Kenneth Clarke stirring the pot at Turner's meat pie factory in Tunbridge Wells, where Archie Norman is the Tory candidate

Ken finds campaign duty as nice as pie

Damian Whitworth observes the Chancellor's electioneering style on a long, hard pub crawl

KENNETH CLARKE was told by an admiring onlooker that he had never looked more fetching. "I know," the Chancellor replied, patting his hairnet. "And I have worn one of these before, you know."

The hairnet was part of a forfeit that he had to pay in order to get his pie. His pie was to be a treat to round off a long, hard pub crawl.

Mr Clarke's day started in Crawley, a Tory marginal recently vacated by the Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames, who has gone to the safer pastures of Mid Sussex. His departure has left a big gap and the Chancellor arrived yesterday to give heavyweight support to the Tory candidate Josephine Crabb.

While Mr Clarke is not in the super heavyweight class of Mr Soames, he is very much a pie and a pint man and after talking to local business-

men yesterday morning he adjourned to the Jordans Toby public house and kicked off with a pint of bitter.

Unfortunately his drinking style was a little cramped by a phalanx of reporters all wanting to ask him about the Tories' civil war over Europe. "I am not tired of Europe but I am getting rather tired of this debate about Europe," he sighed.

"Are those the customers behind that barrier of journalists?" he asked, and broke through both the media and the Tory ladies who were accompanying him and made a beeline for the lads at the bar.

A grinning, sharp-suited regular said that he would vote Conservative if Mr Clarke reduced the tax on beer. "Come on Ken, get the beers in, mate," he bellowed.

"I do keep reducing the duty," Mr

Clarke replied. "But that isn't a shameless appeal to beer drinkers but to stop smuggling," he added quickly, as reporters sensed that they might have discovered a secret drinkers' charter.

Mr Clarke sluiced back his pint and then set off for another engagement, which turned out to be another pub 200 yards down the road. Another pint for Mr Clarke and this time he ensconced himself in a quiet corner and the press were kept at bay so that he could drink in peace.

Mr Clarke looks as if he has eaten a few pies in his time and that was what was on offer yesterday. Unfortunately, he had to watch his pie being made before he could eat it.

At the Turners meat pie factory in Tunbridge Wells, Mr Clarke was met by Archie Norman, the Tory candidate and boss of the supermarket

chain Asda. Mr Clarke was also met by a group of men in white coats. All the visitors had to put on white coats too. Then out came the hair nets. And then helmets and huge wellington boots like small canoes. What could be in there? Would it be raining steak and ale pies?

In the event it was less dramatic and Mr Clarke told the press not to be so silly. "I've worn these before in other places," he said. He didn't specify where. He stirred a huge cauldron of slop and smiled bravely. "We could be the witches in Macbeth," he told Mr Norman. Mr Clarke watched the slop being pumped into tins. Was he looking forward to his pie?

"I once worked in a bakery and that put me off eating bread for about three months," he said, which didn't quite answer the question.

Devolution 'hands Brussels a weapon'

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR will say tonight that Labour's devolution plans would allow European federalists to impose laws on a "weakened and divided" Britain.

The Prime Minister will try to put Tony Blair on the defensive by linking the potential break-up of the United Kingdom to the threat posed by Brussels. He will say in a speech at Aberdeen that each of the countries within the United Kingdom would be less influential within Europe at a time when "ultra-federalists" were seeking to expand the power of Brussels.

Mr Major will also return to Labour's change of stance over the tax-raising powers of

a Scottish parliament. He will end a two-day visit to Scotland by trying to undermine Labour's policy on devolution, which he ridiculed yesterday as being riddled with U-turns and inconsistencies.

Mr Major yesterday trailed tonight's speech by telling voters in Perth that "the devolution proposals of our political opponents are the first step on a route that inevitably will lead to break-up of the United Kingdom."

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Jiang summit in Moscow sends warning to West

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Jiang Zemin of China began a five-day visit to Russia yesterday to end decade-old tensions between the two neighbours and lay the foundations for a partnership to challenge America's global supremacy.

As Russia and China face growing strains in their relations with the West, the two old Communist rivals appeared ready to take the advice of Deng Xiaoping, the late Chinese leader, who wanted to close the past and open the future.

Inter-Russian trade now amounts to some £5 billion a year, and Moscow has re-established itself as China's main arms supplier with the sale of advanced Su27 fighters and other weapons.

The visit's highlight will be the signing of a treaty between China and its neighbouring former Soviet republics, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The agreement sets out effectively to demilitarise the 5,000-mile border area, once the most fortified frontier in the world. A separate agreement to demarcate Russia's 2,700-mile

frontier with China has already been signed and a border commission is expected to complete its work this year. Western diplomats in Moscow are eager to scrutinise the wording of a "joint declaration" that will be signed today by Mr Jiang and President Yeltsin. "In the declaration Russia and China will express their vision of how to form the new international order of the 21st century and will speak out against claims by any country to the role of absolute leader," said Sergei Yastzhembsky, the Kremlin spokesman and

Press freedom plea to Yeltsin

Moscow: Three liberal Russian newspapers yesterday published an open letter from 15 editors and prominent press figures to President Yeltsin, appealing to him to intervene personally to defend press freedom against pressure from government and big business (Robin Lodge writes).

foreign policy adviser, in a dig at Washington.

The tone of the visit could not be more different from the strained relations revealed last month when Mr Yeltsin met President Clinton in Helsinki and they "agreed to disagree" over Nato's eastward enlargement.

Much is being made of Mr Jiang's ties to Russia. Like Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, who studied in Moscow in the 1950s, Mr Jiang is a fluent Russian-speaker from his days spent training at the ZIL car factory in Moscow. He won the admiration of many Russians by asking to visit Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy's estate south of Moscow.

Nevertheless, experts say there are limits to the Sino-Russian romance, and it is unlikely that the partnership will ever mature into a formal alliance. While it may be expedient to help one another, ultimately both require Western money and expertise to achieve economic reform.

Also, while the politicians may have settled their differences, there remain deep-seated suspicions on both sides.



President Jiang of China is greeted in Moscow yesterday by Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister, at the start of a five-day visit

The Chinese fear the day when the Russians have recovered their power and begin once more to flex their muscles in Asia. The Russians, particularly those living in Siberia,

are convinced that China will one day try to swallow Russia's Far East.

□ Sport chief killed: The head of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation, Valentin Sych,

60, was shot dead in an apparent contract killing early yesterday near his villa outside Moscow, police said. His wife was wounded when a man sprayed their car with

automatic rifle fire. Although hit in the leg, she contacted the police by mobile phone.

Mr Sych, whose national hockey squad was flying to Helsinki today for the world

championships, spoke out recently against the involvement in sports of Russia's mafia-style gangs. (Reuters)

Leading article, page 21

IMF says Bonn will miss single-currency target

FROM DEBORAH COLLUETT IN FRANKFURT

GERMANY cannot solve its multibillion-pound budget deficit in time to qualify for European currency union, according to an International Monetary Fund report to be published today.

In the report, World Economic Outlook, the IMF predicts that, contrary to government figures, Germany's budget deficit will be 3.3 per cent of its gross domestic product — above the 3 per cent ceiling set by the Maastricht treaty — and will fail to qualify when economic and monetary union (EMU) candidates are selected in spring 1998.

Jans Tietmeyer, the president of the German Bundesbank, also appeared to be piling the brakes on European currency union yesterday when he said a delay in the starting date could be considered.

Addressing leading German bankers, he indicated that if the leading players in the European Union did not qualify for the launch of the euro on January 1, 1999, the date would have to be put back.

"It is the case that the big

countries fail to meet the criteria, then a delay could be considered," Herr Tietmeyer said. "If they cannot meet the convergence criteria in time, it would be better to say so sooner."

But he said earlier that the Bundesbank was operating on the assumption that the euro would begin on time. He refused to be drawn on whether Germany and other countries would qualify, calling it premature speculation.

His comments came ahead



Tietmeyer: "Delay could be considered"

of the first-quarter publication of the 1997 economic prognosis by six leading German institutes, which is expected to show that Germany's budget deficit will leave it outside the qualification margin.

Leads from the report, released officially in Bonn late yesterday, predicted growth in 1997 of 2.25 per cent — below the institutes' autumn 1996 expectations of 2.5 per cent, a figure also favoured by Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister.

The institutes, independent think-tanks which advise the Government on economic policy, also foresee average unemployment rising this year to 4.28 million, from their 1996 predicted average of 4 million.

According to the economists, this means Germany will be left with a budget deficit of up to 3.2 per cent of its gross domestic product — above the 3 per cent Maastricht ceiling — and failing to qualify for EMU.

However, the report insisted that Germany, in particular, should not be excluded solely on the basis of its economic performance, which is hindered by unification costs.

Nazi camp orchestra leader dies

FROM REUTERS IN LOS ANGELES

HERBERT ZIPPER, a Viennese conductor who formed a secret orchestra in Dachau concentration camp during the Second World War, has died. He was 92.

A spokeswoman at St John's Medical Centre in Santa Monica, California, said yesterday that he died of lung cancer on Monday.

Imprisoned in Dachau by the Nazis, Zipper recruited inmates who had played with orchestras in Vienna and Munich, and they formed a secret orchestra which entertained prisoners on Sundays in an abandoned building in the prison grounds.

The conductor was moved later to Buchenwald concentration camp, from where he was rescued by his family. He moved to Manila, in the Philippines, where he was again imprisoned, this time by the invading Japanese.

When the war ended, he moved to America, where he conducted and taught. A biography, *Dachau Song*, by Paul Cummings, was published in 1992. Zipper leaves a nephew and niece.

Juppé offers France more austerity

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ launched the election campaign of France's centre-right ruling coalition yesterday by pledging to continue policies that have so far helped to make him the country's most unpopular Prime Minister in modern history.

While emphasising his commitment to Europe and to gradual market-oriented economic reforms, M Juppé said that he planned to run the campaign on his vision of France's future, rather than on his record that has seen unemployment rise to an unprecedented 12.8 per cent. He pledged to cut public spending, ease the tax burden, continue privatisation and reduce bureaucratic regulation.

There was evidence of a pre-election healing of Gaullist

party divisions as M Juppé praised the achievements of Edouard Balladur, the former Prime Minister. M Balladur also attended a lunchtime meeting of centre-right leaders at the Hôtel Matignon for the first time since 1995 when he ran unsuccessfully against Jacques Chirac in the presidential elections.

M Juppé followed closely the line taken by President Chirac during his speech to the nation on Monday evening in which he announced his decision to dissolve the National Assembly and call a snap two-round election for May 25 and June 1. Nothing in his address suggested that the country could expect any radical departures from his Government's current policies of

reform and austerity. By promising more of the same, M Chirac has, in effect, turned the election into a referendum on himself and his policies — making the poll the biggest gamble of his political career.

According to Pascal Perrineau, a political analyst, if the country fails to give M Chirac the vote of confidence he needs to ensure him a renewed, if sharply reduced, majority, he will end up the Fifth Republic's weakest President yet.

M Chirac's decision to dissolve the National Assembly in the absence of any political or national crisis — a precedent since the Fifth Republic was formed in 1958 — provoked heated reactions. Lionel Jospin, the Socialist

Opposition leader, led a chorus of disapproval, calling the move "a dissolution of convenience" and accusing the majority of preparing the ground for "a new step towards harsh capitalism".

In a virtuoso display of colourful rhetoric, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme-Right National Front, dubbed M Chirac's decision "an electoral hold-up" and a "shameful swindle", before being abruptly cut short by the privately owned television station TFI.

In a front-page article *Le Monde* noted that the election decision "was the first time that the head of state had used this prerogative [of dissolution] without any motive other than his own interest".

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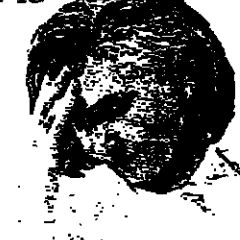
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Saddam defies America with 'mercy mission' to fly home Mecca pilgrims

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU
IN NICOSIA

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein of Iraq yesterday defied a no-fly zone imposed by American, British and French warplanes by sending helicopters to collect Iraqi pilgrims from the Saudi border.

President Clinton warned Saddam not to use religion to evade international obligations, and vowed to uphold the air exclusion zone.

But he gave no sign of how America would retaliate. Earlier, the White House had said it would "respond appropriately" but would not shoot down civilian helicopters. Iraq's official news agency said that a number of helicopters arrived safely at the Saudi border to transfer "sick and weary" pilgrims returning from the annual Hajj in Mecca. State-run newspapers insisted America had no right to object to a "mercy mission".

The latest Iraqi challenge, designed to provoke Washington and highlight United Nations Security Council divisions, came two weeks after Baghdad sent an aircraft carrying pilgrims to Mecca. The Security Council, in a setback for the United States, issued a statement calling for Iraq not to fly more planes without its consent, but refrained from calling the flight a breach of the embargo. China, Russia and France showed sympathy for Iraq's position. Iraqi newspapers made clear yesterday that Baghdad's policy was to highlight rifts in the once-formidable alliance against Saddam and prove that sanctions were weakening. Dissidents said Saddam, 66 next Monday, appeared keen to have another "victory" to present to his people in what the Iraqi media still call the Mother of All Battles.

"America is the loser," trumpeted Babel, a newspaper owned by Saddam's eldest son, Uday. It added that the Security Council's "failure to condemn Iraq after flying its sick pilgrims to Mecca by plane is a clear indication [of this]". Baghdad feels on even safer ground by challenging the no-fly zone over southern Iraq, declared by America, Britain and France five years ago to protect the mainly Shia population. The West's Gulf War allies cited an earlier Security Council resolution warning Iraq against mistreating minorities as justification, but Baghdad has always insisted the move had no backing in international law.

Iraqi opposition groups also accused Saddam of shamelessly exploiting religion for political purposes by using the pilgrim issue to enhance his standing in Arab and Muslim countries, where there is mounting concern for ordinary Iraqis after nearly seven years of trade sanctions. Diplomats said

Saddam had also been emboldened by popular Arab world resentment that Washington has failed to take a strong line against Jewish settlement activity in east Jerusalem.

□ Dubai: Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia said yesterday that 111 nationals were confirmed dead and 100 were still missing after the fire that killed more than 840 Muslim pilgrims last week. Another 50 Pakistanis are still in Mecca hospitals. (Reuters)

Iran holds wargames to counter surprise attack threat

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

IRAN yesterday began a large-scale military exercise in the Gulf intended to prepare crack Revolutionary Guards against a feared surprise attack by America or Israel.

The Clinton Administration is also coming under intense pressure in Congress to launch retaliatory strikes against Iran because of a strong suspicion that it had a hand in the June 1996 bombing of barracks at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia in which 19 Americans were killed.

The three-day wargames began as America launched a diplomatic offensive to win European support for Washington's trade boycott of Iran. Peter Tarnoff, a senior State Department official, will have talks in London today with the Foreign Office. He will urge European leaders to take a tough stance next week when they consider new sanctions over Tehran's involvement in the assassination of Kurdish dissidents in Germany.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's spiritual leader and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, yesterday went to the Gulf coast to witness the amphibious operations. Some 200,000 troops will take part in an exercise codenamed "Tariq-ul-Quds" (Road to Jerusalem) covering four provinces. They will test surface-to-air, shore-to-sea and surface-to-surface missiles. Brigadier-General Rahim Safavi, the Revolutionary Guards' deputy commander, said they had the technical knowledge and skills to build missiles themselves.

The Iranian exercises, involving about 200,000 troops, are among the largest in recent times. Ayatollah Khamenei arrived in Bandar Abbas, the port overlooking

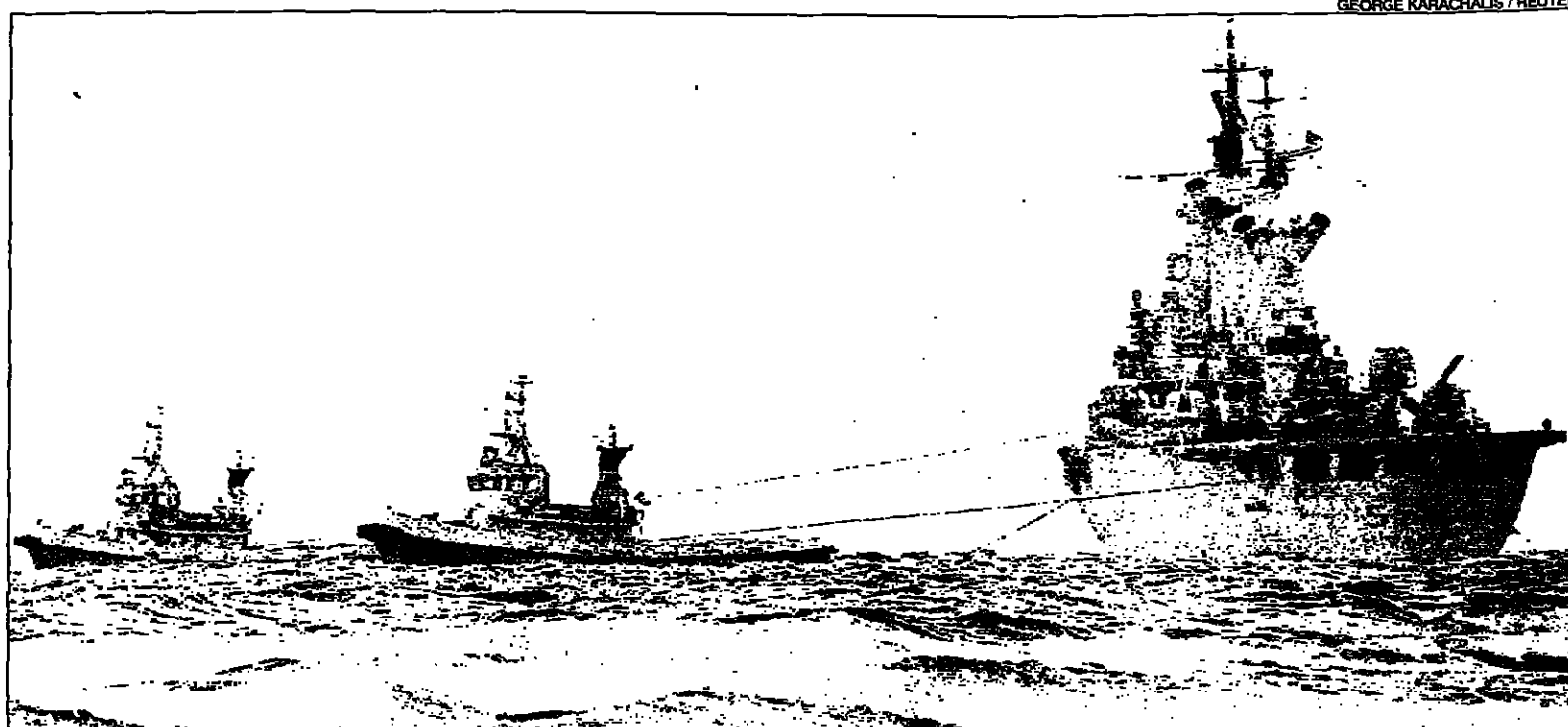
the Strait of Hormuz, to observe the amphibious operations. The country's official news agency said that Iran wanted "to upgrade the quality of its personnel so that it can better defend Islamic ideals and safeguard territorial integrity".

Iran has shown clear nervousness at the pressure in Washington for an attack and the hostile reaction in Europe after the Berlin trial that directly implicated Iranian politicians in the assassination in Europe of exiles. Brigadier-General Safavi said Iran would not allow any "alien power to destabilise regional security". He said the departure of "intruding forces", a term for American forces in the Gulf, would help to enhance co-operation among states in the region.

Senior American officials say that, although they strongly suspect that Iran gave logistical support to those who bombed the barracks in Saudi Arabia, there is still no clear evidence to link Tehran to the attack. Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of masterminding the operation, and the Republicans in Congress are urging a military response.

Iran is also alarmed by Israeli threats of a pre-emptive strike to stop it building facilities to develop a nuclear bomb. Tehran has a thriving nuclear co-operation programme with Moscow and has recently acquired substantial nuclear knowhow. In 1981 the Israelis destroyed the suspected site of an Iraqi nuclear weapons factory to stop Iraq acquiring nuclear capabilities.

Mr Tarnoff is touring Europe to persuade America's allies to toughen their stance towards Iran. He saw French officials on Monday and, after London, visits The Hague and Bonn. Next Tuesday the political directors of the European Union will meet in Brussels to decide what restrictions to place on Iran after the Berlin trial. These are likely to include a ban on all official visits and tighter visa restrictions, a formal extension of the present arms embargo, and the expulsion of all remaining Iranian intelligence agents from the EU.



Tugs try to free the Italian flagship Vittorio Veneto, which went aground off Vlore in Albania while heading a mission to secure the port

Italian expedition to pacify Albania goes aground

FROM TOM WALKER
IN VLORE

THE Italian-Greek operation to secure the rebel-held port of Vlore in southern Albania went badly awry yesterday as its Italian command ship ran aground in heavy seas. The 9,700-tonne cruiser Vittorio Veneto drifted on to a sandbank as a gale buffeted the coastline,

amusing a local population whose gangland bosses are distinctly wary of the 800-strong troop influx.

"It's stupid. They should have known better," said Grigor Seferi, a port pilot. The incident is upsetting for the Italians, anxious to show their military competence in their first opportunity in over half a century to lead a multinational force. Today

Admiral Nicola Azzolini, on board the stricken vessel, hands overall command of Operation Alba to General Luciano Folani, marking the formal end to its seaborne phase.

The Vlore exercise began more promisingly, with a well-coordinated pincer movement on Monday morning. Elite Bersaglieri 18th regiment soldiers arrived by road from their

overnight base at Fier, 25 miles to the north, and 300 Marines skimmed ashore in dinghies and landing craft launched from the amphibious assault craft San Giusto, supported by the then mobile Vittorio Veneto and a minesweeper.

Spokesmen for Operation Alba in Tirana have said the troops will set up joint patrols with police in Vlore.

US rebuffs jazz star over party record

FROM DAVID ADAMS
IN MIAMI

ARTURO SANDOVAL, the world-renowned Cuban jazz trumpeter who defected seven years ago, says he has been denied American citizenship because he once belonged to the Cuban Communist Party.

When he applied for citizenship last year Mr Sandoval, 46, never imagined there would be a problem. A friend and disciple of Dizzy Gillespie, he is best known for his energetic, infectious brand of jazz melodies fused with Afro-Cuban rhythms.

His life in exile is the epitome of the American dream. Granted political asylum in 1990, he has since won three Grammy music awards; is an honorary citizen of several American cities and Orlando's Disneyworld; and has been invited to the White House and performed for President Clinton. He played at the closing ceremony of the Atlanta Olympics, and provided musical backing for Madonna at the Oscar awards ceremony.



Arturo Sandoval: invited to play for President Clinton

"I feel angry and insulted," said Mr Sandoval, who has lived in Miami since defecting while on tour in Rome in July 1990. "I've spent six and a half years paying taxes; I'm a professor at Florida International University and have reached the highest peaks an artist could hope for. This just isn't fair. It's ridiculous."

He says his problem stems from a question on the citizenship application form regard-

ing previous Communist Party membership. He answered "yes", because "I wanted to tell the truth". But immigration rules say applicants may not be granted US citizenship if they have been "a member of, or affiliated with, the Communist Party".

Mr Sandoval, who is appealing, says the Communist Party forced him to join so his wife and son could join him on tour abroad.

French urge power handover in Zaire

BY SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

FRANCE, President Mobutu's last ally in the West, yesterday distanced itself from the ailing Zairean dictator and called for a transitional government.

The move should mark the start of national reconciliation, Jacques Rummelhardt, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman, said. His statement indicated that Paris has abandoned hopes that an international military intervention on humanitarian grounds could save Mr Mobutu.

The rebels, led by Laurent Kabila, yesterday claimed to be only three weeks away from taking the capital, and said they would soon open a western front to cut off Kinshasa from its Atlantic port of Matadi, a vital supply point for the city of five million people. The general in charge of Zaire's emergency Government said his men were preparing to defend the capital.

But General Likulia Balongo, who was appointed by President Mobutu two weeks ago, called on all residents to prepare to resist the rebels. "The army is prepared to defend Kinshasa. All dispositions have been taken. I can assure you that we have

sufficient arms to assure the security of the capital," he said on television.

The general urged civilians to look out for the slightest hint of trouble, and said suspects should be reported to the authorities because rebels could easily infiltrate Kinshasa from neighbouring Angola, Zambia and Congo.

The creation of a siege mentality was clearly aimed at returning Kinshasa to the days when the President, 66, ruled through a ruthless secret police and encouraged civilians to denounce those who expressed opposition to his dictatorship.

"We don't want war in Kinshasa, because if war comes here many people will suffer. And there is no way of escaping," said General Likulia.

His tough stance followed an announcement that President Mobutu would not attend talks with Mr Kabila in South Africa. Mr Mobutu's son said his father, who has prostate cancer, was still convalescing, and that the four-hour flight to Pretoria or Cape Town would be too distressing. He said the President was still prepared to talk to Mr Kabila.

WORLD SUMMARY

Sanctions imposed on Burma

Washington: The United States attempted to increase Burma's isolation from the international community yesterday, imposing trade sanctions in protest at persistent repression by the military dictatorship (Tom Rhodes writes). Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, announced a ban on all new American investment in the Asian nation.

The embargo, designed to make neighbouring countries bring greater pressure on Burma to improve its human rights record, will not affect existing American interests.

Bottled history

Johannesburg: After a string of failed money-making ventures, Winnie Mandela has started selling bottles of soil taken from the modest Soweto home she once shared with Nelson Mandela, at the equivalent of \$6.50 each (Ingrid Gilmore writes). The tiny bottles, sold as from "Heroes Acre", come with a "certificate of authenticity". The house has for several years been a regular stop for tourists and the bottles are selling well.

Algeria toll rises

Algiers: Islamic fundamentalists have murdered 93 v-lagers in the worst massacre in five years of Algeria's civil war. The overnight massacre took place in Haouch Boughdi el Khemis, about 16 miles from the capital. It brings to nearly 300 the number of villagers killed since April 3 in the regions of Blida and Medea, south of Algiers, according to official tolls. (AFP)

Death leap

Rome: A 13-year-old Italian girl suffering from the eating disorder anorexia killed herself by jumping off a balcony at her family's seventh-floor Milan flat because she thought she was too fat. She was 7st 3lb, and wanted to lose more weight. The girl, who was not named, landed in front of her father and brother and died instantly. (Reuters)

Police on skates

Amsterdam: Police herplan to use roller skates to pursue law-breakers. Starting this summer, a team of six officers on skates will patrol the city's pedestrian zones and narrow streets of the tourist district in a crackdown on pick-pockets and shoplifters. (Reuters)

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FBI blamed for delay in catching Soviet spy Ames

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE FBI significantly delayed the capture of Aldrich Ames, the most notorious CIA double agent, who sent at least ten allied agents to their deaths, an investigation by the US Justice Department revealed yesterday.

In his report Michael Bromwich, the department's Inspector-General, said the FBI should have detected a spy in American intelligence when Moscow first moved against US agents in the mid-1980s.

Also blaming the CIA, Mr Bromwich said a joint investigation had not begun until 1991, three years before Ames was finally arrested and jailed. He said the CIA had not referred potentially incriminating evidence concerning Ames to its sister agency in late 1989.

The FBI examined its own cases between 1985 and 1986 without finding any explanation and apparently took a passive view when it learnt that a number of CIA agents had also been lost. "Early FBI involvement in the investigation of Ames would have had the potential to accelerate significantly his identification as the source of the agent losses," Mr Bromwich said.

Ames, a senior CIA counter-intelligence officer, was found to have spied for the KGB for nearly a decade, receiving at least £1.3 million in the process. He provided information that led to the deaths of ten Soviet and other officials working as clandestine operatives for the United States and jeopardised more than 100 covert operations in Europe.

An internal CIA inquiry after his arrest painted a devastating

portrait of the agency's hapless attempts to hunt down the traitor in its midst. No insiders had thought anything of Ames's continual drunkenness and apparent indolence. James Woolsey, the CIA director at the time, later failed to dismiss or demote 11 senior officials involved and was forced to resign.

In the latest report this week, the Inspector-General said the CIA should bear the primary

responsibility but portrayed an equally inadequate response within the FBI. He was particularly critical of the slow, analytical inquiry made after the loss of two FBI recruits who had been working inside the Soviet Embassy in Washington. The pair, Valery Martinov and Sergei Mortorin, were abruptly recalled to Moscow in 1985 and executed in secret.

Mr Bromwich blamed inadequate briefing of senior management and said William Webster, the FBI director, and his senior deputies had little knowledge of the agent losses. "Mid-level supervisors and FBI personnel appear to have believed that receipt of this information imposed no responsibility on the FBI," he said.

Some FBI analysts had determined by 1988 that America had suffered "catastrophic damage" and that espionage was the most likely cause. The FBI issued a statement which said it had "strongly taken issue" with many of the report's conclusions. But the document will embarrass the FBI, reeling from another Justice Department attack over forensic science errors in court cases.



Woolsey: was forced to resign as CIA chief



Ames: sent eleven allied agents to their deaths



Thomas Koskovic, 18, faces murder charges at Newton, New Jersey

Pizza men 'shot in thrill kill'

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

TWO pizza delivery men were lured to a rural corner of New Jersey and shot dead by two teenage "thrill seekers". Giorgio Gallara, 24, and Jeremy Giordano, 22, drove out of their way to deliver two pizzas last Saturday night to a ramshackle house in Franklin, a small settlement in the state's northwest.

When they parked their delivery vehicle, Gallara and Giordano found themselves under fire. Their bullet-riddled, blood-spattered car rolled down a hill, and the two badly injured men were allegedly ordered out of the car and died after being shot once each in the head.

Police said the alleged killers wanted "to see what it would be like to kill somebody".

One of the pair, Thomas Koskovic, 18, pleaded not guilty to charges of double murder after two guns matching the murder weapons were found at his family's house in Franklin. The second suspect, aged 17, was held on juvenile charges.

Koskovic, a school dropout, was alleged by friends to have had a fixation about death, guns and gangs. He could face the death penalty if found guilty.

Scandal clouds Clinton flood tour

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S tour of flood-ravaged North Dakota was overshadowed by Whitewater developments yesterday after Mark Middleton, a former White House aide, offered to co-operate with the investigation into the scandal.

At the same time Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor, said he had extensive evidence of possible obstructions of justice, and Jim McDougal, the Clintons' former Whitewater business partner, accused them of lying. Then, confirming the views of the Clintons' political opponents, he said Webster Hubbell, the convicted former top aide, held the key to the investigation.

Mr Starr formally sought to extend the term of a special grand jury in Little Rock until November. He said McDougal, sentenced to three years last week instead of the maximum 84, had provided substantial information that the jury now needed to consider.

Mr Middleton was reported to have offered his co-operation in the investigation of irregular funds contributed to Mr Clinton's re-election. The Arkansas lawyer has apparently also offered Mr Starr limited testimony on Whitewater in return for immunity from prosecution.

Mr Middleton, who left the White House in early 1995, has offered to testify about an allegedly incriminating dinner conversation that he had with Mr Hubbell after he had resigned from the Justice Department and pleaded guilty to defrauding his Arkansas law firm of almost \$400,000 (£245,000).

Colony deports 'illegal' girl of 9

FROM CATHERINE FIELD IN HONG KONG

CHUNG YEUK-LAM, a nine-year-old girl who had illegally joined her Hong Kong father, has been ordered out by the Government amid a wave of public anxiety that the territory will be swamped by unwanted mainlanders after it reverts to China at the end of June.

The girl, smuggled in with her mother when she was a year old, has been attending a private school in the colony. But a last-minute appeal by her father to Chris Patten, the Governor, was turned down. More than 30 immigration officials and social workers were involved in the operation to remove her and her mainland-born mother. The mother, Chau Chuk-ngan, was led from the family apartment in handcuffs.

Guangdong Public Security Bureau says Hong Kong has underestimated by 100,000 the number of children born to Hong Kong residents who are waiting to move to the colony. It has received 130,000 applications for mainland children to be reunited with their fathers, according to an official.

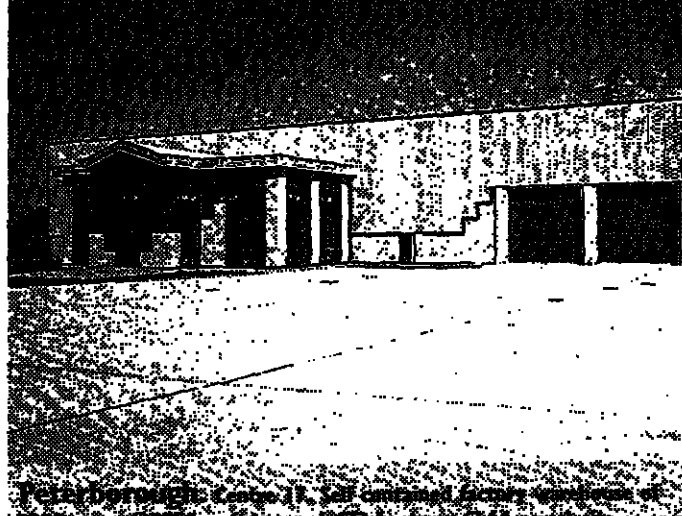
"Snakeheads" (human-smugglers) are charging between £3,000 and £4,000 to bring mainland-born children to Hong Kong before the handover. Tung Chee-hwa, the chief executive in waiting, says his government will deport any mainland-born children who enter the territory without permission, but he is expected to urge Chinese officials to increase from 60 to 100 the daily quota of mainland children to be allowed into Hong Kong.

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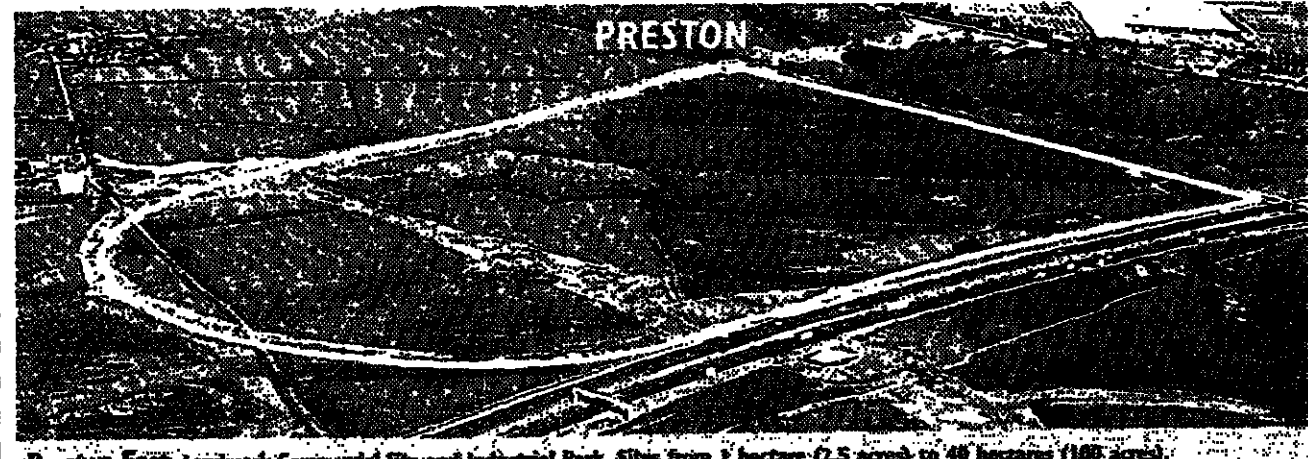
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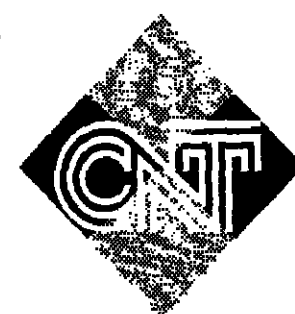
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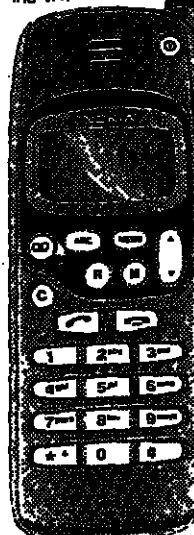
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The Look – and how to get it

Forget designer labels — if you crave to be noticed, mix eccentricity with a dash of the absurd



It would take a lot to dislodge my nanny from her position as the alpha female in our household. In the delicate web of alliances that constitutes a family, she reigns supreme, further up the hierarchy even than those two paragons, Darren the completely reliable builder, and Derek, the only confidant to get the upper hand with my hair.

But there was a nasty moment the other evening when she said I couldn't go and see Jane Birkin sing at the Festival Hall because she, Linda, had plans of her own. I spent the evening in a fearful sulk. It wasn't missing Birkin's performance that bothered me particularly: why I'd really wanted to see her in person was to check out The Look. Birkin is 49 now and, in her pictures, projects an extraordinary allure. She manages to combine an almost adolescent grace with the emotional assurance of

— and almost impossible to analyse. Who's got it and who hasn't; whether you can acquire it — or lose it — is a subject of a fascination bordering on obsession for those of us who take an interest in these things. It's probably easiest to define The Look by what it is not. The good news is that it isn't to do with money, and it certainly isn't to do with designer labels. One might even say that designers are the kiss of death to a Look.

Consider the cases of Courtney Love and Lady Harlech, both, in dramatically different ways, possessors of supremely original Looks — until Gor Ar by big-name couturiers. Stripped of her Briny-lon baby-doll nighties and her rhinestone tiaras, the new, soignée Courtney in her bias-cut Versace evening frock looks about as dangerous as Doris Day. The distinctive edge that made her

name has evaporated. The case of Lady Harlech, whose look is her fortune, is more complicated. The elusive quality that made her a muse to John Galiano seemed so desirable to Karl Lagerfeld that he first enlivened her to Chanel, and now appears to have succeeded in eclipsing the very style that he so admired. Recent photographs show a beautiful woman with a look stamped Chanel as indelibly as the lettering through a stick of Brighton rock. The verve, the eccentricity, have vanished — replaced by a chic that is impressive, but nothing like as interesting as the original.

In fact, if one were looking for a one-word definition of what makes a Look, eccentric would be it. "If no one laughs at my hat in the street," said the French actress Polaire, "I know it's a failure." Girls with a Look are the opposite of fashion victims. You may think they look absurd, but you find yourself wishing that you could look absurd in exactly the same way.

'Girls with The Look are the opposite of fashion victims'



Elegantly waisted

You can wear your summer coat short or long, single or double breasted — any way you like, so long as it's belted, says Style Editor Grace Bradberry

Left: Chocolate suede belted jacket, £346 by Lisa Johnson at Jones Tel: 0171-240 8312

Middle: Cream rain mac, £269 by Joseph, 77 Fulham Road SW3 Tel: 0171-590 6200

Right: Waxed cotton coat, £312 by Lisa Johnson at Jones Tel: 0171-240 8312

PHOTOGRAPHER: Karl Grant; STYLIST: Faye Sawyer; HAIR AND MAKE-UP: Helen Bannion; MODEL: Jacqueline Fedorink at Models 1

Caught in designer gridlock

FOR a few minutes last Wednesday, something occurred on the stairs of Alberto Ferretti's new Sloane Street store that is becoming commonplace in London's designer land: gridlock.

Guests at the party, thrown to celebrate the shop's imminent opening, could move neither up nor down, but were crammed instead against the gilt balustrades. Designer handbags were crushed into chignon-clad thighs, and glasses of champagne wavered perilously between enamelled finger nails.

So many people had turned up — including actresses Kate Winslet and Anna Friel, and the designer Alexander McQueen — that eventually the traffic of guests from floor to floor brought those bent on circulating to a standstill.

It could almost have been arranged as some sort of metaphor for what is happening in London's two main designer thoroughfares, Bond Street and Sloane Street. As the American fashion bible *W* declared this month: "London now faces designer gridlock."

Yes, apparently it's true: now that every major designer on the planet has caught on to the "swinging" London phenom-

Every major designer now wants a shop in London. Grace Bradberry reports

non, there is no longer any room to swing anything.

As *W* explains: "In a retailing rush that has virtually eliminated large sites suitable for flagships, rents have spiralled to the point where doubts are being raised that any of the stores will ever be profitable."

New Bond Street and Bond Street, in particular, are chock-a-block. Donna Karan has two stores there. Tommy Hilfiger also has a site and Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren are due to open soon. Versace is set to open another, and Prada has been there for a while. Soon Fenwick's could be the only substantial shop to sell anything with a "realistic" price tag. Kurt Geiger is wisely moving out, having sold its lease to Guess jeans — yet another American label.

To those people — surely the majority

— who would never contemplate paying £300 for a handbag, the phenomenon must seem absurd. But Britain — or certainly London — is once again in the grip of a style obsession. People are talking about labels in a way they haven't done for years, and there are large cliques who really believe that they must have whatever it is from Gucci or Prada.

So who is behind all this? Who decreed that Bond Street was once again the place to be, and who decided that what people coming to London really wanted was not chintz, but white walls?

Though there are several figures on the scene, much of it is down to one little-known woman, Christina Ong.

Through her company Club 21, this discreet Singaporean multi-millionaire, known as the Greta Garbo of the style industry, has bought the British rights to the Armani, Prada and Donna Karan fashion brands.

Ironically, it is Mrs Ong's style, cool, minimalist and far Eastern, that is dominating the shiny new designer London. And it is she more than anyone who has brought the city to the chicest form of gridlock imaginable.

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WORK the new way to escape family life

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WORK: the new way to escape family life

From Berkeley, California, that most sybaritic of American university campuses, has come a dispiriting work of sociological research. It concludes that many Americans, particularly young mothers, are so unhappy with their lot, so beaten down by the late 20th century family's demands, that they prefer to spend time at their workplaces rather than at home.

Not only did a third of surveyed fathers and a fifth of mothers describe themselves as "workaholics", 30 per cent said that they would like to spend longer hours in the office and more than 60 per cent said that they were perfectly satisfied with the already long shifts they put in (48.3-hour weeks on average for men, 41.7 hours for women). Despite all the clamour about the preciousness of time, very few parents said that they wanted shorter days at work.

The survey, conducted by the Berkeley sociology professor and author Arlie Hochschild, also found that work-share schemes for young parents were almost unanimously ignored, as were programmes that offered child-rearing workers part-time employment. Fewer than 3 per cent of American workers in the Hochschild survey accepted their companies' "enlightened", "family-friendly" offers to work from home.

The overwhelming message that a startled Professor Hochschild and her research team received went something like this: spend more time at home? You must be joking!

The respondents' attitude was not, moreover, explained by fears of redundancy. People with sympathetic managers seemed more likely to want to stay at work than those under

An American survey proves what many of us never dared admit — the office is where we take refuge from the stresses of home. **Quentin Letts reports from New York**

tough bosses. Nor was overtime pay a factor. The better-off often appeared the more eager to linger at the office.

American employers are plainly doing something right. If people are so content in their jobs, the workplace must have come a long way since the days of Dickensian hard labour. The Berkeley sociologists praise such touchy-feely innovations as workplace posters, which remind employees that they are "part of the corporate family", or company T-shirts that emphasise team work. Employees, even in these days of "downsizing", actually feel loved by their employers.

More pessimistically, however, the survey betrays a gloomy subsidence of home cheer across America. For many working couples, apparently, the image of the home as a place of spiritual calm and physical warmth is a travesty.

The image
of home as a
place of
calm and
warmth is a
travesty

Home for many of these people, Professor Hochschild found, had nothing to do with Bing Crosby cardigans and apple-pie self-indulgence. Instead, it was a place where the baby is always crying, where the spouse grumbles, the pet piddles on the floor, the household bills invade and there is little to do but slump, dispirited, in front of the gothic box. "I sometimes watched families sitting together after their dinners," Professor Hochschild writes in her forthcoming book *The Time Bind*.

"They watched sitcoms in which television mothers, fathers and children related in an animated way, while the viewing family engaged in relational loafing."

During commercial breaks, the same families might watch advertisements for Instant Quaker Oatmeal, one of hundreds of household products sold with the emphasis on convenience and time saving.

In the oatmeal advert, a smug mother announces: "Nicky is a very picky eater. With Instant Quaker Oatmeal I can give him a terrific hot breakfast in just 90 seconds. And I don't have to spend any time coaxing him to eat it!" The same message is drummed into American parents: if you are not saving time as you organise your private life, you are a dunce. It accentuates an already wearying competitiveness in American life, quickens heart beats and reduces the amount of patience parents will show their young.

Home life becomes drawn into a whirlpool of material expectations and one-upmanship, combined with the insistent calls made on adult time by a society which increasingly demands that they automate, maximise and compartmentalise their days. They must work, play and exercise, must become parents and at the same time try to retain an image of youthfulness. In the

process people become so exhausted that they can no longer think.

Simplicity has gone. In a stunning example of how people follow the clichés of the media, of how individualism in America has surrendered to the herd instinct, one family visited by Professor Hochschild had a set amount of "quality time" or "QT" every night from 9 to 9.30pm. Similarly, they had the same, set dinner "hour" (8 to 8.30pm) during which the telephone was religiously taken off the hook and the family members concentrated hard, as if they were chess players or Buddhists, on how to commune. In the old days people were allowed to muddle along, perhaps smoke a post-prandial pipe, or do some knitting, while the children thrashed around in the garden. Now we have "QT".

These are people whose minds have been addled by too much information, too many sociological inculcations from the liberal establishment and permitted too little real freedom. Professor Hochschild notes that in employment philosophy, the nearest equivalent to what is going on in the American home is "Taylorisation" — the principles of scientific management put forward by Frederick Taylor, who argued that the worker's mind and body must be coerced, rather than his heart nurtured. At the same time, ironically, Taylorisation has gone out of fashion in American workplaces, where people are now encouraged to feel an emotional bond with their work, to embrace quality. Is it any wonder that employees are likely to stay longer with their firm than they are, given divorce rates, with their spouse?

Ellen Galinsky, president of New York's Families and Work Institute, which studies the twin demands of parenthood and professionalism, welcomed the survey. "It will help people to look in the mirror," she said. "There is certainly a blurring of the lines between work and the family, although one needs to say that she is talking about only certain companies." Indeed, although Professor Hochschild claims that she surveyed people from all walks of life, one wonders whether her findings are really as true of an assembly-line worker as they are of professionals, people with vocations.

"People's jobs make the biggest differences," Ms Galinsky continued. "What your job is like, how demanding or hectic it is, one's relationship with co-workers, how much say one has in what goes on at work, and so forth." But the Families and Work Institute was not surprised by the finding that people seemed happy at work. "Most American people do like their jobs," said Ms Galinsky. In a recent poll of employee loyalty, the institute found that 37 per cent of workers said that they felt extreme loyalty to their company, with 37 per cent saying they were very loyal and only 29 per cent saying that

they were somewhat loyal.

What else does all this tell us? That the dismantling of family traditions and the diminishing of child discipline has resulted in a deterioration of domestic happiness? Professor Hochschild quotes an economist who says young people today are more likely to "underperform at school, commit suicide, need psychiatric help, suffer a severe eating disorder, bear a child out of wedlock, take drugs and be the victim of a violent child". Suffice to say, they appear to have done things better in the old days, when one parent stayed at home and children minded their Ps and Qs.

Next year, instead of a take-your-daughters-to-work day, perhaps America's children ought to be encouraged to have a keep-your-parents-at-home day.

A temple to food, and no guilty aftertaste

There is a particular Alan Bennett character whose idea of a day out is a visit to a new carpark in some out-of-town shopping centre. I have not quite reached that stage, but last Friday I did make a pilgrimage to a new food shop, sited nowhere near where I live, to check it out.

The fact is, I went to visit the Joy of Real Food (pity about the cringe-making name) because I wanted in the first instance to breathe in the holy air of this latest temple to gastronomy, and in the second, to witness the extraordinary consolidation of the new eco-hedonism.

This shop — white walls, white light, glass jars, marble shelves — is the beautiful manifestation, the confident, evolved incarnation of the born-again health store. It's the new baby of Kevin Gould, who, by opening the Realfood Store in Little Venice some years back, utterly changed the image (and the self-image) of the environmentally concerned, additive-conscious healthy eater.

Before Gould, this was the dark, health store was designed to make the ethically concerned shopper feel good. Commerce and capitalism were despised; the shops could exonerate themselves of the sin of selling (and the customers of the sin of buying) only if the products were worthy enough, the packaging dull enough and the pleasures to be obtained from either scant enough.

The Realfood Store speaks to an entirely new sort of customer, one that had not exactly to be invented, but ticked into being. The shop is expensive, luxuriously stocked and beautifully arranged. The aesthetic borrows from the pious less-is-more world view — see-through packages labelled in a bold, sans serif typeface — but shamelessly subverts it: this is about abundance, seduction, about spend, spend, spend.

It is also the case that in recent years the whole ethic of vegetarianism has changed. Yes, people still like to feel that it is a morally virtuous position they are taking, but the mass motivation is nothing more than narcissism. "Health" is just the way self-indulgence takes its form these days.

Gould, though, is not playing to our narcissism, but to our desire for gratification, which is infinitely to be preferred. I can't stand the smug piety of all those people who want a prize for not eating red meat or the utter dreariness of those who feel that they are superior in their puritanical self-denial.

One of the things that irritates me about the Body Shop, for example, is the goodie-goodie ugliness of the packaging, its sheer anvoluptuousness. Why buy anything of this order if it doesn't make you feel good? A

purchase from the Body Shop is a sad purchase, however many native Americans you may like to think you're helping by making it.

So a movement that manages to espouse organic farming while encouraging people to buy food for no other reason than that it tastes good is in a different league. It isn't about self-congratulation but about quality, or rather learning about quality while still savouring the joys of acquisition: pleasure not principle.

It also stands more chance of sticking. True, it doesn't come cheap, but I'd much rather we had an environmentally concerned movement that allowed us to enjoy our extravagance, rather than feel primly guilty about it.

So, the feelgood factor comes to ethical consumerism, and about time too. I don't buy eggs from battery hens or meat that's been intensively farmed, but nor do I want to weave my own supper. If it tastes good, I'll eat it and that's about as committed a stand as one should take about food.



Nigella Lawson

WHEN I lived in Florence with a schoolfriend of mine who was Catholic I used, from time to time, to accompany her to church. I loved watching everyone turning up for their passeggiata. Men and women would process up and down those wide, marble aisles showing off their newest clothes, their expensive key rings (to denote expensive cars) and, if at all possible, their ruffled, frilled and shiny-shoed children. Throughout the service, conversations would be held. Flirtations would be pursued, games of tag played.

To say this was tolerated by the priests would be to misrepresent the picture: it was expected. No longer, though, I read, a Florentine priest, Raimondo Sorgia, has issued an edict. No more mobile phones, no more mini-skirts, no more noise and, altogether, no more pushing and shoving.

Well, the Italians might be finding this troublesome, but I bet the Archbishop of Canterbury wishes he had their problems.

THE self-importance of the politician is extraordinary. After the utter mess — the traffic jams, the general confusion and blood-pressure rising inconvenience — caused by all the bomb scares on Monday, the party leaders have declared that the IRA won't achieve its aim of interrupting the election campaign.

If only they knew... All blows to democracy should be condemned, but it's the disruption to our own everyday and ordinary life — the plodding job of getting to work and back — that we actually mind.

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Alan Coren



■ The piano was unfit to play, but now fitness is my forte

They came to take the piano on Friday. They brought it down the stairs from the landing where it had stood for 25 years, and it went bang as it hit every step, but not a bang any musician could have put his finger on, because it had been out of tune for 20 of those years, and if you put your finger on it, the notes that came out belonged to it alone.

After they had got it down the stairs, they heaved it onto a little cart to wheel it up the garden path to their van, and I walked behind, though lacking an old cock linnet, to see it off. It was a bit like a cortege. One or two neighbours watched — neighbours always watch a removal van — but they didn't say anything, because there is something about a piano leaving a house that begs discretion. Has the owner gone broke, has he gone deaf, are we watching divorce proceeds being distributed to the musical one?

It was none of these. It was simply that the piano was clapped-out. It had in truth never been very clapped-in: we had bought it for fifty quid in 1972 for the children to learn, but they learnt very little, except that you don't get much of a piano for fifty quid. It then stayed in the upstairs hall so that I could use it to tune my banjo, though as the piano was out of tune, the banjo was warped, and my ear is tin. I was never able to play anything that anybody could recognise, except parts of the slow movement of *Polly Wolly Doodle*. Musicians among you may be surprised to learn that *Polly Wolly Doodle* has a slow movement, but that is only because you have not seen my fingering technique. I have to stop after each chord to have a cigarette and work out where to put my fingers for the next one. So, a few days back, I asked a man round to tune the piano, and he said it wasn't worth tuning, let it go.

I came indoors again after they had driven away with my quarter of a century, feeling a bit glum because it seemed as though the piano had been delivered only about five minutes earlier, and I went up to look at the spot where the piano had stood, and there was this amazingly thick oblong of untrod carpet with a lot of stuff on it which had, over the years, fallen off and behind the piano, snapshots, bits of Lego, marbles, Christmas cards, wizened toffees, an Action Man's head, three light-bulbs, an arrow, what might once have been the newt that climbed out of Victoria's aquarium in, I think, 1980 — and a book.

The book was the fitness manual of the Royal Canadian Air Force. I had never seen it before. I do not know anyone in the RCAF, I hardly even know anyone who is fit, and I could come to no other conclusion than that Giles, at about 10, had decided either to escape piano lessons by running away to Toronto and becoming a fighter pilot, or to get himself fit enough to knock his piano teacher about. And then I opened the book. It was a revelation. It was the fitness book I had been looking for all my life. It said you did not have to go to gyms, jog for miles, buy exercise bikes or rowing machines or weights, you could get fit by answering the telephone or putting your hat on.

Thanks to isometrics. Isometrics was a muscle-stress technique whereby every physical action you took was done with total effort: you lifted a phone as if it weighed a ton, you put your hat on as if Arnold Schwarzenegger were trying to lift it off, with the result that you not only drove blood oxygenated to Bollinger effervescence throughout your body, you also transformed that body into a rippling powerhouse able to see off Canada's enemies without even getting into your plane.

Drawbacks? Social only. I was on the phone when my wife got home, and she was nagged with concern by the time I rang off (what's happened, your knuckles were white, your veins were standing out, you're covered in sweat) and when friends came for bridge on Sunday and I went out between rubbers to get drinks, I could hear their faint mutters (is he all right, he closed that door as if 2 Para were trying to push it open, he's gripping his cards like a madman, his face went purple during that last contract), but you ignore such things if you're turning yourself into a titan. Any day now, I shall buy another piano, just so the neighbours can watch me carry it indoors.

Peter Brookes
23 iv 97



"YIPPEE...SANTER'S EARLY THIS YEAR..."

A Europe of frustrations

All prime ministers learn that Britain can never reform its EU partners

A strange gleam has entered John Major's eye. His face muscles have softened and his jerky gestures have relaxed. All credit to Jacques Santer, the man he wisely chose to be president of the European Commission. On Monday, as the Prime Minister pondered his fate, an arm rose from the lake and in his hand was Excalibur, finest Luxembourg steel. Mr Santer knows how to repay a friend.

Mr Major had always planned a solo flourish at some point in the campaign. He favours free votes and referendums. He is intransigent on beef and fish. He sabotages business on the Council of Ministers. He out-Thatchers Thatcher. "I will veto if it is right for Britain," he said on Monday. "I will keep my feet on the brakes." If that meant isolation, so be it. "It is called British national interest," Mr Blair would jeopordise all that.

There is of course an election on. Just as Mr Major felt obliged to play the xenophobic card, so Mr Blair has felt obliged to follow suit. He ended a speech on Monday with a flurry of platitudes about patriotism, vacuous even on Mr Blair's lips. Foreign affairs used to be a Tory strong point. He was taking no chances. Politicians in office can get away with chicanery overseas, but at home they must defer to baser instincts. They must be tough on foreigners and tough on the causes of foreigners.

British politicians are never for or against Europe. They are merely in or out of office. A good Tory is opposed to any extension of state power when on the hustings or the backbenches. In office he views the state as an agent of benevolent central rule — as, indeed, himself. Likewise, in opposition, Europe is portrayed as a monument of corruption, a travesty of international co-operation, a cosmopolitan elite with an imperialist programme. Yet when the limousines start to crunch and the chateau banquets start to clink, when the cameras whirr and the subsidies gush, Europe suddenly seems different. It becomes a soothing hostel for battered leaders. The rules may be tiresome and the fees outrageous, but the taxpayer pays and no British leader can ever face resigning.

That is why every Prime Minister from Edward Heath through Wilson,

Maastricht was "a triumph". The resulting goodwill would put Britain in the forefront of reform. Farm subsidies, waste and corruption would end. All Europe would say, "thank you, Britain". Today, Mr Major is a changed man. He favours free votes and referendums. He is intransigent on beef and fish. He sabotages business on the Council of Ministers. He out-Thatchers Thatcher. "I will veto if it is right for Britain," he said on Monday. "I will keep my feet on the brakes." If that meant isolation, so be it. "It is called British national interest," Mr Blair would jeopordise all that.

Simon Jenkins

Santer and the Franco-German alliance. Britain's interest in Europe is in free trade. This interest is different from that of France or Germany, which is to use the European Union to redefine historic relations between them. Different again are the interests of the poorer states, each seeking a mix of greed and glory.

Every British prime minister must find a third way between commitment to the EU and withdrawal. Every one has. That way has been to behave relentlessly like a bad European, a cantankerous member of the club, a thorough nuisance. European monopolies must be ended. Agriculture must be reformed. Corruption must be rooted out. These things are said — now by Mr Blair — despite no expectation of their ever being implemented. No other country wishes to implement them. Frankly, they are too steeped in the public-sector corruption of which Brussels is now an incorrigible offshoot. So Britain wails and behaves badly. The bluff of withdrawal is never called. The policy is stable, though most painful

Defence: silence is sinister

Iain Duncan

Smith on the threat that Labour denies

The one subject that has been scrupulously avoided during the election campaign by the media is that of defence. The justification advanced for this is that since the end of the Cold War, defence is not an issue because there is no threat. This is extremely complacent and ill-informed, though it serves the purposes of the Labour Party.

Just a few days ago, Israel's General Elhan Ben Eliahu revealed that Iran has been testing missiles with ranges of up to 1,500 km, which would threaten Israel and most of the key targets in the Middle East, so increasing tension in an already politically combustible zone. Yet this should be no surprise. Analysts such as Jane's have been warning the West of such an eventuality. It all began with Iran's offer of finance to North Korea's missile programme in the mid 1980s, which gave it the option to purchase modified Scud B missiles, which were then being developed. Coupled with Iran's spending of an average of \$500 million a year on purchasing strategic technology, including nuclear components, this makes the threat very serious. Yet Iran is not alone. By 2005, Libya will have in its possession missiles capable of targeting London, Syria, Iraq and others are engaged in similar programmes.

Western intelligence finds it almost impossible to confirm who has nuclear warheads and delivery systems until the last moment. For example, in the late 1980s the Saudi Government bought missiles from China which the West discovered only when they were unloaded at the docks. The proliferation chain has so many links that covering them all has become impossible.

But it is not just nuclear capability or the ability to launch that matters. Chemical and biological weapons are also spreading alarmingly. The Americans are so worried that they have set up a federal quick-response force, whose task is to deal with terrorist threats to their main cities. They understand that what happened on the Tokyo underground could happen in America. It doesn't take much to deliver chemical or biological agents that can wreak havoc with the civil population. Furthermore, Russia has continued to work on chemical weapons, particularly in developing weapons which do not use the banned precursor chemicals. New information indicates that the Russians have developed three completely new nerve agents. They have also been developing a new form of anthrax that is totally resistant to all known antibiotics. Although Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin both promised to stop the programmes, they failed to do so. Even if Mr Yeltsin were to stop the programmes now, the technology is easily transferable to other countries, such as China.

There is no question that a threat exists to key British interests around the world, not just in the Middle East but in the Indian subcontinent and even in the Far East. Over the next five to eight years, proliferation will develop into a direct threat to Britain and her allies in the West. Yet this issue isn't even raised in the general election.

Although Tony Blair has said that he wants stability in defence, the first thing he plans to do is to create instability through a wide-ranging review as soon as he gets into power. This review, says Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, David Clark, would have "painful consequences". There is little substantial commitment to defence, or even understanding of the nature of the threat. Instead, what is becoming clearer by the day is that Labour plans to reduce expenditure on defence by at least £5 billion to help to cover the gap between its spending pledges and money at present available. The Labour Party is full of people who believe that the British Armed Forces should be reduced to a small paramilitary force capable of intervening in circumstances such as those in Bosnia, but not capable of fighting a full-scale war. Not one commitment, other than a vague one to the Eurofighter, exists when it comes to equipment programmes. Not once has Mr Blair or any of his spokesmen referred to the serious nuclear, chemical and biological threat that is growing around the world.

China clearly intends to replace Russia as the world's second superpower. Within the next five years, it will have a more formidable ocean-going fleet than the Royal Navy, a fleet that could pose a serious threat to Taiwan and to other Western interests. Yet how we address this has not been properly debated. Eight years ago, 70 per cent of Nato could mobilise in 12 hours; now only 2 per cent could do so, and with a much reduced capability. Most of Europe's commitments to Nato are "hot-low" units, which exist in name only. Labour has stated time and again that it admires this European approach to defence. Many Labour MPs want a reduction in British defence spending to the European average, which would result in massive further cuts.

It is time for a proper debate on this crucial subject. For if the prime concern of any British government is the defence of the realm, such silence does the public a serious disservice. Either we face up to the threat or we shall find ourselves sleepwalking into a crisis. The public should be allowed to decide now which party cares most for their security, for it will be too late in five years to say sorry.

Iain Duncan Smith is the Conservative candidate for Chingford and Woodford Green.

Chloe's friends

MADONNA has thrown away her conical bras in favour of Britain's latest fashion export. On Friday night she threw a surprise party in London for Stella McCartney, the new fashion designer to the house of Chloe.

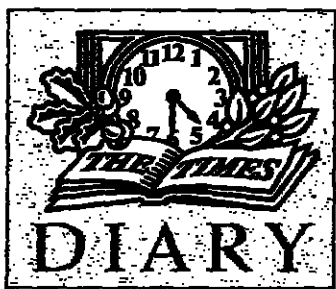
During a "brief and private" visit to London, the singer-cum-actor helped to organise the secret celebration. The pair have enjoyed a close relationship over several years, and friends suggest that

Madonna will soon be a loyal client at Chloe.

By way of a venue, Madonna opted for Mo Mo, a North African restaurant in Piccadilly which is barely open. "A member of her office telephoned on Thursday and said that Madonna wanted to give a party here for Stella the following night," says an employee. "We told them that the walls were still stuck together with Sallotape, but nothing would put them off."



Girls night on the Town, for Madonna and Stella



More than a hundred guests came for the champagne and Moroccan hors d'oeuvres, including Naomi Campbell, Simon and Yasmine Le Bon, Jimmy Nail and Rifat Ozbek. To ensure supplies, Madonna's office warned beforehand that she would be drinking Seabreezes, a cocktail of vodka, cranberry and grapefruit juice. In the event, however, she confined herself to hot toddies — it was a cold night.

Inter alia

SO CONCERNED is Lynda La Plante, the creator of *Prime Suspect*, by material on the Internet that she has written a four-hour TV serial for Channel 4 warning of the evils of the World Wide Web. In *Killer Net*, which will start filming in July, a serial murderer will

use the information superhighway to conceal his identity.

"The Net is out of control. There's no way to regulate it, and it can only get worse," she told me at a Channel 4 lunch yesterday for writers such as Alan Bleasdale, Fay Weldon and Paula Milne. "I love using it to research scripts, but I was very disturbed by what I saw while working on *Killer Net*."

Today marks the opening of the building pictured here. It is not some commuter development, but the Shakespeare Country Park in Mursyama, Japan. Its purpose is to inspire the Japanese to stay in Japan for their holidays rather than



to pour their money into Stratford-upon-Avon.

Spearheaded

ONCE the exclusive preserve of South Africa's white political leaders, the lush, colonial Fernwood

Club in Cape Town, on the lower slopes of Table Mountain, was the setting for a ritual ox-slaughter over the weekend.

With the sprinklers twisting and white-coated waiters meandering with drinks trays, the newly formed Council for Traditional Leaders gathered on the club's front lawn in full skins, pelts and bones. Rather than reading the minutes, they kicked things off by killing an ox with an ibhobo, a traditional spear.

Whether or not it was the old white ghosts of the club cursing them, the omens were bad. The ox broke free of its enclosure before being killed, then made no sound when pronged — an inauspicious sign.

When animal rights protesters complained, they were swatted away by the council, who jointly declared: "There was no other way of doing it. We had to call on all the past kings."

Bad dogs

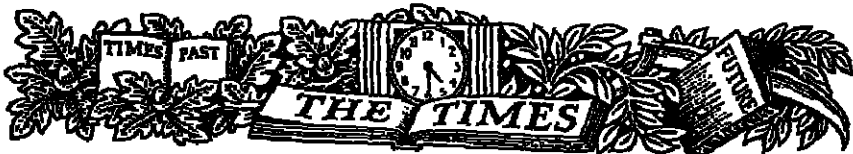
SEX and illegitimacy are ruffling the peace of Clifton Foliat, a pretty Oxfordshire village and home of Paddy, a Labrador belonging to Max Hastings, the Editor of London's *Evening Standard*. A local cocker spaniel recently gave birth to five puppies. They were half lab-



"How much tabloid TV has he been watching?"

rador and, like Paddy, had a distinctive white mark on their bellies. Soon the talk over the garden fences was of one thing: on quiet afternoons around the village Paddy and the spaniel had been spied in familiar poses. Neither Hastings nor the spaniel's owner, however, is willing to take the foundations on, and a sad sign has appeared in a Hungerford pet shop: five mongrel puppies, for sale at £75 each.

P.H.S



THE CHINA HAND

Yeltsin welcomes an old adversary to new ties

At the height of Soviet paranoia about its enemies, Brezhnev used to accuse the Americans of "playing the China card". At the end of the 70s Moscow believed that it was encircled by countries which had formed a tactical alliance to destroy the Soviet Union. Yesterday the pattern appeared reversed. It was the Russians who brandished a fist full of Chinese cards. President Yeltsin and his Government welcomed President Jiang Zemin to Moscow with all the warmth and ceremonial of a visit Moscow believes will set a new course in Sino-Russian relations for years to come.

Both countries have political and economic interests in closer ties. Trade is flourishing, and the long Sino-Russian border is increasingly porous. Chinese traders and consumer products have penetrated deep into Siberia; Russian industrial exports have found a market adapted to their unsophisticated level of technology; and both countries are happy with the huge flow of Russian arms exports. Russia sees the Chinese market as a saviour for its vital arms industry. And China has an important alternative source of supply after the Western embargo that followed Tiananmen Square.

More important than the revival of economic ties is the political rapprochement between Asia's two biggest countries. Paradoxically, this is all the easier since the collapse of communism in Russia. Both countries are now able to conduct their relations on the basis of national interest, rather than being snared in doctrinal argument over the leadership of the world communist movement. For both Beijing and Moscow there are three overwhelming factors that now bring them closer together.

The first is mutual security and the settlement of the long border dispute. The quarrels over disputed islands in the Ussuri river provoked border skirmishes that

almost flared up into full-scale war in the 1970s. Russia has vast troop and missile concentrations throughout the sparsely populated region which it can now barely afford; China has long resented what it sees as a legacy of unequal treaties it was forced to negotiate with Tsarist and then communist Russia. An agreement by both sides to pull back their forces is almost complete.

The second factor is the fear in both Moscow and Beijing of resurgent Islam on their borders. Russia has long worried about Islamic fundamentalism. The Chinese have seen armed rebellion in Xinjiang, where Muslim separatists are conducting a war against the Han state that is causing grave concern to the communist leadership. A crucial aspect of Mr Jiang's visit is the inclusion, in still secret protocols, of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian former Soviet republics in the agreements on armed forces. Both Moscow and Beijing must be confident that these countries have agreed, in details of these accords, not to allow Islamic activists to use them as a basis for regional destabilisation.

The third and most important factor is the resentment in both capitals of American power. Moscow, especially, is still bitter at the proposed enlargement of Nato, which it sees as threatening to its own security. Kremlin advisers are now urging Mr Yeltsin to concentrate on Russia's Asian destiny and "play the China card" in retaliation. For its part, China is watching with concern Washington's increasingly tough stance on human rights, political freedoms and Hong Kong. An agreement to support each other, especially in the UN Security Council, would make it harder for America to act as the world's only global superpower. Warmer relations between Moscow and Beijing must boost self-confidence in each country. The West will watch the outcome warily.

PADDY'S PARADOX

The looming prospect of more seats but less influence

Paddy Ashdown has had a better general election than most. From a low base, the Liberal Democrats have built up support during the campaign. The "Blair effect" does not seem to have damaged their core support. The shift away from the details of constitutional reform to the basic issues of education and health has paid dividends.

However, previous contests have seen Liberal surges fade away on polling day when voters decide between the two main parties. The lot of the Liberal Democrats in a predominantly two-party system is hardly a happy one. Policies must be found that are distinctive and attract publicity. Ideally, such suggestions should appeal to a broader national interest than the partisan proposals of the Conservative and Labour camps.

Liberal Democrat proposals also need a direct relevance to crucial sections of the electorate. An increase in taxation to fund services, sought by most citizens and staffed by the public sector middle class, has met all these objectives. Mr Ashdown has appeared radical and responsible. His delicate coalition between the Celtic fringe and the common room should continue to hold together.

Despite that, it is unlikely that the party will exceed the 18 per cent share of the national vote that it achieved five years ago. The compensation for Mr Ashdown is that a disciplined concentration on the three dozen constituencies where Liberal prospects seem strongest should work in his favour. It would certainly be no surprise if the Liberal Democrats held more seats in the next Parliament despite a smaller percentage of votes nationwide.

Effective deployment of scarce resources

has obvious virtues. But it also involves an implicit admission of failure as a national political force. Many parts of Britain will see their lowest Liberal vote since 1970. The Liberal Democrats have abandoned their previous position of "equi-distance" between the two larger organisations. As a result they have found themselves to the left of Labour on many matters. That might be convenient in the short term. But it largely precludes co-operation with any other party except Labour in the future. That inflexibility will have its costs and limitations.

More seats will not mean increased influence if Labour wins its promised outright majority. In truth, the perfect result for Paddy Ashdown's party would be another Conservative victory. That would open the possibility of a full-scale realignment of the centre-left and a Lab-Lib alliance. The next best option would be a hung Parliament: although here Mr Ashdown has all but pre-committed himself to a deal with Tony Blair. That would provide a taste of power but plenty of pitfalls as part of the bargain. The worst of all worlds would be a Labour landslide. A realignment of any form would be deferred for at least a decade. Mr Blair's already tepid enthusiasm for electoral reform would diminish even further.

All this provides Paddy Ashdown with a paradox. In parliamentary representation he might become the most successful Liberal leader since David Lloyd George. Yet his long march to political relevance could be permanently halted. His party would once again resemble a collection of pressure groups and local councillors rather than a real rival to Labour.

NEW CO-OP

The CWS needs rebirth not preservation

The Co-operative Movement was born of worthy ideals and sound business sense — 150 years ago. The market in which it now operates could barely have been imagined by the Rochdale Pioneers; their legacy looks as out of place in it as they would.

Yet there are some who would grant the Co-op National Heritage status. A mooted £1.2 billion bid for part of the organisation has been greeted as near sacrilege, with Labour politicians predictably racing to sign motions against the prospect. Little, however, has been heard from the deserving poor for whom the Co-op pioneers simply wanted to provide cheap food.

Today those customers are being well catered for by some of the most sophisticated retailers in the world. The shelves that stock exotic fruits are but an aisle away from those that proffer bargain price baked beans. Their motivation may be different, but the highly commercial supermarket giants have taken up the Co-op's original aim and improved upon the execution. With their loyalty cards and array of bonus schemes, the chains have even usurped the "divi" which the Co-op is belatedly resurrecting.

The Co-op's arcane structure has helped preserve it from the realities of the commercial world which normally ensure that those who underperform are swept away. The Co-operative Wholesale Society, operator of 1,000 shops, a bank, an insurance company and other scattered interests, has a voting structure to confuse any psephologist. This minimises the rights of the real owners.

Andrew Regan spotted that the thousands of individual members of the CWS own the

business every bit as much as the policy holders who this week have been cashing in on their ownership of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society. His plan is to pay them for their under-utilised assets and then set about making the most of them.

There is no denying that a hefty element of what used to be stigmatised as asset-stripping is crucial to Regan's aims. But this is no longer perceived as the evil that it once was in the world after privatisation, sensibilities are attuned to the need for efficiencies and profits. The majority of Co-op members would grab enthusiastically if Regan were to dangle cash in their direction.

But the myriad of boards that must be negotiated before any bidder can reach the ultimate owners of the CWS means that only the most determined, and ingenious, predator stands a chance of unlocking the potential profits in the Co-op. Andrew Regan does not look the part. It is not merely his characterisation as a young, thrusting whizzkid which operates against him. His tactics have been sufficiently lacking in subtlety to give the Co-op top brass the ammunition they need to keep him at bay and preserve their own comfortable and well paid jobs.

Regan has, however, highlighted the value that lies latent in the Co-op. Others will now be keen to unlock it. They should be encouraged to do so. The Co-op was once mighty, including proud titles such as the Royal Arsenal Co-op in Woolwich. The Royal Arsenal itself is now deserted. The council is seeking lottery money to turn it into a heritage site. The Co-op cannot be saved in the same way.

Fuelling the debate on Britain's future role in Europe

From Air Commodore Alastair Mackie

Sir, Jacques Santer (report, April 22) minced his words. He could have done a befuddled electorate a service with a blunter account of the damage that politicians' deceptions are doing to Britain's prospects.

Our would-be representatives at the Amsterdam conference vie with each other in assuring us of the doughty fight for Britain they would put up. Thereby they conveniently ignore the fact that there is little left to fight for: most British economic, military and diplomatic sovereignty has long gone.

So — as each party has made a point of not telling us — has much of our power to influence decision-making: British negativity and intransigence, now customary in European conclaves, have seen to that. Worse still is the disingenuous fostering of the illusion that a referendum on the tortuous issues of EU and EMU could properly determine Britain's way forward.

So much Santer could have told us. He could also have fitted out our negotiators with the decent clothing for the conference table of one unassailable truth — that Britain goes fully into Europe or to the wall.

Yours faithfully,
A. MACKIE,
4 Warwick Drive, SW15,
April 22.

From Lord Pearson of Rannoch and Lord Stoddart of Swindon

Sir, When they pretend that our national wellbeing depends upon our remaining enslaved by the Treaty of Rome, Mr Hattersley, Lord Howe and Sir David Steel (letter, April 19) clearly show how the Europhile case has been reduced to empty slogans.

The 9 per cent of our economic activity which takes place with "Europe" would not suffer if we left the European Union because, like Norway and Switzerland, we could negotiate favourable access to its single market. We trade in deficit with our European "partners", who therefore have more jobs at stake on their trade with us than we do on our trade with them.

Foreign businessmen, Germans included, invest in the UK because we have low industrial on-costs, low tax and low inflation; because we have good labour relations with a skilled workforce; because we speak English;

and because Britain is a wonderful place to live in. They will not continue to do so if we are dragged much further into the sinking, corporatist, siege economy that is "Europe".

It is a great credit to the British people that 40 per cent of them now wish to withdraw from "Europe" altogether, despite being so consistently misled by all their political leaders for many years. And surely it is our seat on the Security Council and our membership of Nato which ensure that we remain a global power, rather than our position as an outvoted voice in an outdated failure?

Yours faithfully,
PEARSON OF RANNOCH
(Conservative),
STODDART OF SWINDON
(Labour),
Joint Chairmen, House of Lords
Maastricht Study Group,
House of Lords,
April 21.

From Mr Edward McMillan-Scott, MEP for North Yorkshire (European People's Party Parliamentary Group (Conservative))

Sir, Tony Blair is not a Christian Democrat, as Daniel Johnson suggests ("Is Tony Blair our answer to Helmut Kohl?", April 19). Christian Democracy is a continental centre-right movement which promotes "personalism" against the collectivism of the socialists. In Germany it embraces the right-wing CDU who, like the British Conservatives in the European Parliament, are associate members of its parliamentary group.

The secretary-general of the CD-based European People's Party, Klaus Welle, recently urged an approach to secular parties such as the Gaullists "to develop an effective common counter-balance to the socialists in Europe". In economic policy, CDs are close to British Conservatism and getting closer, under the pressures of global competition and the EMU convergence criteria.

Tony Blair and Helmut Kohl may agree about European integration and making Britain less competitive through the trade union inspired Social Chapter, but little else. Blair is a collectivist.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD McMILLAN-SCOTT,
European Parliament,
97 rue Belliard, Brussels 1040,
April 20.

Election 97

From Mr M. Eden Irving

Sir, Mr Christopher Harris (letter, April 16) commends the voting system in New South Wales, Australia, but in my view the alternative of abstention is offers is not enough.

The ballot paper should have an extra box against each name for voters to record a negative vote for the candidate they detest the most, the negative votes to be deducted from the candidate's total.

This system would go some way to eliminate "wasted" votes and the need to introduce anti-sleaze candidates and their like. It would be a more effective way of returning an acceptable Member of Parliament.

Yours faithfully,
M. EDEN IRVING,
The Coign,
Comb Hill,
Haltwhistle, Northumberland,
April 16.

From Mr David Ford

Sir, I understand that the bulk of your coverage must feature on "the three main parties" and compare their policies and ideas. However a sizeable proportion of the public is not intending to vote for the big battalions, and are looking elsewhere for a party to vote for. These voters are not being served by the media.

I accept that the Green Party will not form the next Government, but it is a serious political party with a thorough analysis of all areas of policy and a credible, costed programme of government. It has a sizeable number of councillors across the country and has a long track-record fighting all sorts of elections.

It has firm links in the wider environmental and social movement and has won itself respect for the arduous campaigns which resulted in the successful passage of two parliamentary Acts (the Warner Homes and Energy Conservation Act and the Road Traffic Reduction Act) in the past two years.

I submit that all this deserves more analysis.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID FORD,
(Green Party Election Agent,
Yorkshire Area),
25 Marlborough Road,
Shipley, West Yorkshire,
April 15.

From Mr Robert A. Hurst

Sir, I worked closely with Tony Blair on several commercial cases in the early Eighties. My recollection of him as a young barrister is that of a no-nonsense advocate and negotiator with a keen eye for detail.

Unless he has changed dramatically over the past 14 years, I am unable to recognise him as the ventriloquist's dummy sitting on Chancellor Kohl's knee.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. HURST (solicitor),
73 Southway, NW11,
April 20.

Archbishop's call for 'open' baptism

From the Reverend Richard Dormandy

Sir, The Registrar of Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese (letter, April 19) quoted only part of the canon clause on infant baptism. Although a minister may not refuse baptism, canon B22 does explicitly allow delay "for the purpose of preparing or instructing the parents or guardians or godparents".

Given that we now live in a post-Christian society, it is not at all unreasonable that part of such preparation and instruction should include attendance at Christian worship.

Moreover, the canon also enjoins the minister to "instruct the parents that the same responsibilities rest on them as are required by the godparents". Since canon B23 requires godparents themselves to be baptised and confirmed, it is not unreasonable to expect parents to show a similar degree of Christian commitment if they are to discharge their Christian parental duties properly.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD DORMANDY,
Holy Trinity Vicarage,
1 Sydenham Park Road, SE26.

From the Reverend Douglas Cockbill

Sir, Throughout most of its history, the Church of England has practised a baptismal policy that can only be called flabby. The Church has seen its

numbers decline since the turn of this century while distributing baptism just about as loosely as it possibly can.

Despite the Archbishop of Canterbury's example (report, April 14) the fact is that this open policy has failed. Jesus warmly welcomed everyone who came to Him, but He also issued challenges and taught them. Many people are grateful that they are challenged and required to worship God for a few months before a baptism is undertaken. Some become active and devout Christians as a result.

Baptism is not the means of welcoming people into the Church. St Paul makes it quite clear that it is our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we are failing inquirers if we do not convey that message to them. All churches I know of that require people to show public evidence of faith before a baptism offer an alternative service of blessing and thanksgiving to those who will not make this commitment.

I am unaware of a single case of anybody being turned away from an Anglican church outright without any such alternative being offered.

Yours sincerely,
DOUGLAS COCKBILL,
(Press Officer, The Movement for Reform of Infant Baptism),
St Andrew's Church,
89 Malvern Avenue,
South Harrow, Middlesex,
April 19.

Never too late

From Mr Gerry Handson

Sir, The understandable pleasure Miss Madge Dugdale derives from her Open University BA to add to the London BSc she obtained 60 years earlier (letter, April 18) will have been matched by the many OU mature students who, like myself, have today "robed" for their first degree.

For them, however, the pleasure will have been mixed with gratitude for the "second chance" of higher education afforded by this great institution, with its universally recognised standards of excellence.

When I left my elementary school 53 years ago to start work at the age of 14, the BA honours degree I have just received was unimaginable. At my degree ceremony today my thoughts turned to the late Harold Wilson whose inspired vision brought the Open University into being. Though never of his political persuasion, I bless his memory for the pleasure, pride and satisfaction his initiative has given to so many, including, Sir,

Yours truly,
G. HANSON,
Potters Lodge, 74a Slough Road,
Iwer Heath, Buckinghamshire,
April 19.

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Archaeology stuck 'in the doldrums'

From Mr Tim Tatton-Brown

Sir, The refusal of English Heritage to allow any further archaeological investigations on the site of the Globe Theatre in London (Professor Andrew Gurr's letter, April 16; see also letter, March 22) is only the tip of the iceberg. For the last decade or so, virtually no new purely research excavations have been started in England. Instead millions of pounds have been spent on excavations of redevelopment sites which have produced very little. Collating these morsels has become the order of the day, thanks to the policies of English Heritage.

Almost all funding for archaeological excavation in Britain is now developed-led and carried out by competing "commercial" archaeological units, while university archaeological departments receive only minimal grant-aid for research projects.

The result is that British archaeology, which earlier this century led the world, is now in the doldrums. Twenty or thirty years ago major research projects like Barry Cunliffe's at Fishbourne Palace or Danebury Iron Age hill fort, or Martin Biddle's Winchester excavations, were setting new excavation standards and revolutionising our knowledge of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval archaeology. Where are the equivalent projects today?

With the advent of lottery funding, English Heritage should stop its policy of "mindless burial", as Professor Gurr correctly calls it, and encourage the setting up of new long-term research excavations on key sites like the Globe Theatre.

Yours faithfully,
TIM TATTON-BROWN,
Fisherton Mill House,
Mill Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire,
April 20.

St Helena's discontents

From Mr Roland Brown and Mr Philip Daniel

Sir, As co-authors of a recent independent report for Overseas Development Administration on the legislative environment for foreign investment in St Helena we wish to comment on the letters from the Director of the St Helena Institute and Minister of State, Sir Nicholas Bonsor (April 18, 19), both of which touch on the important issue of inward investment.

As we pointed out in our report, the establishment of a more hospitable climate for inward investment requires radical changes in the existing regime relating to immigration (work permits) and the grant of land rights.

Unfortunately so long as the St Helenians continue to be denied the right to live and, more importantly, to work in this country, the required changes are unlikely to be acceptable to the local community. Cut off, for the most part, from opportunities for employment in the rest of the world, it is not perhaps surprising that the islanders are reluctant to share their meagre patrimony with outsiders.

Restoration of the right of abode and the adoption of measures to attract inward investment are not therefore alternative policies for St Helena. They go together, and one is almost certainly a precondition for the success of the other.

Yours faithfully,
ROLAND BROWN,
PHILIP DANIEL,
Transborder Investment Advisory Services,
85a High Street, Lewes, East Sussex,
April 21.

Victory anthem?

From Dr Francis Jackson

Sir, Your correspondent Mr Michael Beckett (letter, April 22) noted a performance of *Blair in a Minor* for Evensong on Saturday, May 3, in Westminster Abbey. How different might things have fallen out had Hugh Blair written his canticles in the relative major key.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS JACKSON,
(Organist Emeritus of York Minster),
Nether Garth, East Acland,
Malton, North Yorkshire,
April 22.

Counting them in

From Mr J. M. Potter

Sir, One of the joys of spring these days is to see pages of *The Times* filled with Marathon finishers (April 14-18 and 21) instead of seemingly endless numbers of accountants.

Yours faithfully,
J. M. POTTER,
47 Park Town, Oxford,
April 17.

Pot luck

From Mr N. D. Tomlinson

Sir, During the 5min 20sec it took a snooker player to earn £147,000 for making no mistakes (report, April 22) I also made no mistakes in my job but unfortunately earned only 89p. I look forward to the days of the televised world quantity surveying championships.

Yours faithfully,
N. D. TOMLINSON,
16 Malin Close,
Stubbington, Fareham, Hampshire,
April 22.

DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL

[illegible]

Bringing politics a-Live



BBC Radio 5 Live sees the election as a chance to win new listeners, reports Alexandra Frean

BBC Radio 5 Live has successfully established itself as a powerhouse sports network, attracting more than one million listeners to its mid-week evening football coverage.

The only problem is that it is supposed to be a whole lot more than that.

The station, available only on AM, was conceived three years ago as a 24-hour rolling news and sports service. But while it has built a healthy following for sport, it has failed to stamp its imprint on the nation's consciousness as a news network.

That may all be about to change, as 5 Live sets out to prove, with coverage of its first general election, that it is bringing the same breezy approach to news as it has to football, golf and grand prix racing.

"Sterile debates in the Commons, political point-scoring, party bickering can be incredibly tedious," says Roger Mosey, controller of Radio 5 Live. "A network like Radio 5 Live has to find a focus for people and say to them, 'This is what's happening to your life'."

"If you say it's about politics, it's a turn-off. But if you say it's about schools, hospitals or the community then they will be interested. The sleaze thing is a good example of how, if you are not careful, you can get into a very sterile point-scoring debate — the real thing about sleaze, the big picture, is to do with how it has alienated voters. If you can get that flavour into your coverage you both make it more accessible and realistic."

Mr Mosey appears to have already accomplished that with the launch of "Contact 5 Live", an off-air telephone hotline that listeners can use to tell the station what questions they would like it to put to politicians appearing on its shows.

Each time the line is mentioned on air, it receives hundreds of calls, exceeding even Mr Mosey's expectations.

Its extensive use of the BBC's

regional network of correspondents also distinguishes the station from national news providers who focus heavily on London. "You get a very different perception of the campaign in Leeds than in Westminster. People who were around the country in 1992 were much more likely to spot that Labour's campaign had stalled than the people at Westminster news conferences," Mr Mosey says.

Radio 5 Live is not avoiding the set-piece conference altogether, however. It has been airing the party press conferences at length, sometimes in their entirety. "We are trying to avoid the soundbite culture. We play the press conferences long so that people can pick up the drama of the questions and answers and have a chance to make up their minds," Mr Mosey says.

Although it is too early to tell how well 5 Live's election coverage is doing, there is no doubt that during the "phony war" that preceded the campaign proper the station lifted its audience levels. It reached a record 5.62 million listeners each week in January. In February, its audience share hit a record 3.6 per cent — no mean achievement at a time when audiences are fragmenting due to increased competition.

One of Mr Mosey's obvious problems in trying to push up the audience figures during the election is that his station is aiming at precisely that sector of the population — younger, mid-market listeners — which has been identified by the pollsters as showing a waning interest in party politics. The key to overcoming this obstacle lies largely in tone.

The tone of Radio 5 Live — illustrated best in the witty repartee of its breakfast show presenters Peter Allen and Jane Garvey — is friendly, informal, brisk and, mercifully, not terribly politically correct. Mr Mosey, who was editor of the *Today* programme before join-



Breakfast show presenters Peter Allen and Jane Garvey set Radio 5's breezy tone

ing 5 Live in December, is so pleased with the duo that he extended their programme by half an hour in February.

Significantly, the extension was advertised in three tabloids — the *Express*, *Mirror* and *Star* — a clear indication that it is not aiming for the *Today* programme's more upmarket audience. The strategy seems to have worked. Mr Allen and Ms Garvey now reach two million listeners a week, but have not dented *Today*'s audience of five

million. As part of the continuing process of establishing his station as a news service, Mr Mosey plans to make Radio 5 Live live up to its name, replacing some of the pre-recorded features put out during the daytime with more live news. There will be a new look to Sunday mornings and a replacement for the daytime presenter Diana Madill, who is leaving in the summer to concentrate on television work.

Mr Mosey regards the proposed launch next year of a 24-hour BBC television news

service as an opportunity for his radio station to expand its live coverage. Because Radio 5 Live has been made part of a new continuous news unit that also includes the forthcoming television channel, Mr Mosey will be able to gain access to an even larger pool of live feeds.

"We want to have it so that if 5 Live is covering a breaking story, they can say on 24-hour television, 'Over on 5 Live they are talking about X' and then they will point their camera into that [radio] studio," he says. "It's really exciting."

PAPER ROUND

Brian MacArthur



Which direction is Hollick headed?

As John Major and Tony Blair await the verdict of the electorate, several editors and proprietors are equally pondering the future of their careers or their empires after May 1.

One, according to the Fleet Street rumour mill, is Clive Hollick, chief executive of the United News and Media group which owns *The Express*, who is almost certainly the most frustrated newspaper "proprietor" in Britain.

Hollick, a committed supporter of Labour who was made a life peer by Neil Kinnock, enthusiastically supports Tony Blair and, reputedly, increasingly relishes his new role in the newspaper industry.

Yet *The Express* will almost certainly endorse John Major and the Tories on May 1, even though under his stewardship its reporting of this election has been fairer to Labour than at any election in living memory. To back Blair would be too abrupt a departure from what Express readers expect — even though Hollick got a page in *The Express on Sunday* last weekend to argue the case for Blair while Lord Stevens, United's chairman, put the case for the Tories.

That was a civilised debate but the battle in the Express building as Hollick and Stevens fought for the political soul of *The Express* and *Daily Star* was by all accounts much more brutal. Stevens may have won that, but may be on his way out sooner than he expects.

So the question now being asked in Fleet Street is how long Hollick can live with himself and run a Tory tabloid. That is why the rumour mill suggests that Hollick may have set his sights on the *Daily Mirror*, the paper that has always been Labour's most faithful friend — or on switching *The Express* from its historic role as a Tory tabloid to a Blairite tabloid.

Still smarting from being outwitted by the Mirror chief executive, David Montgomery, when he was on the Mirror board, Hollick would not only relish his revenge, but would also be seen by Labour as a more natural owner of the paper.

All support is welcome and *The Mirror* has put all its effort behind New Labour in the past four weeks (especially in a brilliant front page last week devoted to a letter from a nurse complaining about hospital conditions). But Blair and his colleagues are reputedly embarrassed by some of *The Mirror*'s other editorial

articles, which have lacked gravitas associated with the paper in its days of glory.

Hollick certainly has the financial muscle to bid for *The Mirror* — and the plan if he succeeded would be to reinvent the paper as a mass market tabloid supporting the Blair revolution.

Whether or not Hollick succeeds in his rumoured ambition, changes seem certain at both the *Express* and *Mirror* groups. Bridget Rowe, now Editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, is strongly tipped to take over *The Mirror* from Piers Morgan.

If Hollick remains at *The Express*, there are at least question marks over the future of Richard Addis, its Editor, especially if he decided to turn it into a Blairite tabloid set against the *Tory Daily Mail*.

The Fleet Street rumour mill is equally at work about the future of *The Observer*, suggesting that *The Guardian* wants rid of it. According to this rumour, buying the *Observer* was an act of hubris, it loses money and limits the ability of *The Guardian* (which made a small profit last year) to expand and compete with *The Times* and *The Independent*. So why not cut the losses and sell the paper, or merge with *The Independent on Sunday*?

There are several potential buyers — the Barclay brothers (already owners of *The Scotsman* and *The European*), Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers (which already has a stake in *The Independent*), and Mohamed Al Fayed's Liberty group. David Montgomery (the *Mirror* group has a stake in *The Independent*) is also reputedly anxious either for a merger or a deal to share costs.

It is a rumour that refuses to die in spite of repeated denials from *The Guardian*. Robert Gavron, once owner of the *St Ives* printing group and a man with a keen eye on the bottom line, has been an unusually active non-executive chairman of the Guardian Media Group recently. Yet at least two offers have been rejected in the past three years and Hugo Young, chairman of the Scott Trust which owns GMG, strenuously denies the rumours. The word from *The Guardian* is that the Trust is committed to *The Observer* and that Gavron is attracted by the challenge of restoring its fortunes. If GMG is indeed committed to *The Observer*, but needs to raise money it is more likely to sell regional assets rather than *The Observer*.

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INSIDE SECTION

2

TODAY

CATALONIA

That heady feeling takes over a region and its festival
PAGES 36-39

CREME

Why the City of London is looking for go-getters
PAGE 47

SPORT

Rowing's Fab Four sets course for Sydney Olympics
PAGES 50-56

TELEVISION AND RADIO

PAGES 54, 55

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY APRIL 23 1997



Melmoth: led board discussion on how to fend off bid



Green: secret meetings



Regan: involved in setting up of Galileo to handle bid

CWS director confesses to helping Regan bid

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

ALLAN GREEN, one of the directors suspended last week by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, admitted yesterday that he has been secretly meeting the two men planning a hostile bid for the society.

It also emerged yesterday that Nomura, the Japanese bank, is the chief backer of the bid. It was apparently preparing to lend £12 billion to Galileo, the vehicle set up by Andrew Regan and David Lyons of Lanica Trust to carry out the bid.

According to an affidavit received yesterday afternoon by Linklaters & Paines, CWS's solicitors, Mr Green, who became head of retailing last November, admitted meeting Andrew Regan and David Lyons six or seven times in the last six months. Documents

handed over included: copies of management accounts; draft proofs of accounts for the financial year; lists of stores and their market value; details of membership; and documents showing voting rights of corporate members. Mr Green says he is not sure of precisely how many documents he gave to the two men.

He also handed over most of the highly sensitive minutes of a board meeting on April 2 at which CWS directors, headed by Graham Melmoth as chief executive, discussed the advice they had received on how to fend off the attentions of Lanica and Galileo. He says he did not give them information on subsequent strategy meetings, however.

Mr Green says: "I now unreservedly accept that I breached my authority and

was in breach of my obligations." Linklaters & Paines intends to press for damages against Mr Green for harm done to the business by his actions.

This morning Mr Regan and Mr Lyons are due to hand over affidavits and documents received from Mr Green. They went to the High Court yesterday to seek a 24-hour extension to the order which should have seen them hand over the documents and affidavits at 4pm. They said they needed more time to gather the documents. CWS contested the extension, but Justice Lloyd granted them a further 18 hours. The court will decide on Friday whether the injunction remains in force.

Legal representatives of the CWS went to the Serious Fraud Office yesterday to re-

quest that it open an investigation into payments made by Mr Regan during an earlier deal. The deal in question involved the extension of a contract between CWS and Hobson, the food manufacturing arm of the Co-op sold to Mr Regan in 1994 and which he subsequently sold to Hillsdown Holdings.

The CWS has queried why more than £2 million was paid to advisers, including a businessman named Ronald Zimet. Mr Regan wrote to the CWS yesterday insisting that the sum paid to Mr Zimet, believed to be over £1 million, was "reasonable". Hillsdown Holdings is believed to have supplied the CWS with files on the deal done when it bought Hobson, and these have now been passed on to the SFO.

A spokesman for Nomura

International said yesterday that it had been preparing to complete legal formalities to provide Galileo, the vehicle set up to carry out the bid. It is understood that it is still prepared to back Galileo if the legal problems are resolved.

Nomura, which is not intending to take any equity in the deal, was notified on Monday by CWS's solicitors of the court order that all documents from Mr Green be handed over. It immediately sent all the relevant documents to Galileo's solicitors, Travers Smith Braithwaite, and agreed not to make any use of the material.

Under the Galileo proposal, it is understood the £1.2 billion would be used to pay £1,000 each to 500,000 active members, with some £10 million going to the Co-op union.

Troubled M&G plans overhaul of strategy

By CAROLINE MERRELL

M&G, one of the UK's biggest and best-known fund managers, is planning a complete overhaul of its investment strategy to improve its poor investment performance.

The company, which used Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, in its recent advertising campaign, has come under increasing pressure from independent financial advisers (IFAs) to tackle its performance problems. IFAs provide M&G with half its business but they have become increasingly reluctant to advise clients to invest with the company.

The fund management house will, over the next few weeks, give details of its new investment style in a series of meetings with top IFA firms. The fund manager wants to operate a more "disciplined" approach to fund management. Michael McLintock, M&G group managing director, said too many of the company's funds were managed in a similar way, which meant they all performed badly at the same time in the economic cycle.

He said: "We are planning to have a more disciplined approach. We are not going to abandon our value style, but investors will have more choice about volatility and the level of risk on funds."

M&G's traditional "value" approach has led it to invest in stocks with higher dividend yields. Although successful over many years, recently the policy has produced disappointing results. Its £1 billion Midland & General unit trust, for example, is the worst-

performing fund in its sector over three years, while its Recovery fund is 125th out of 135 in its sector.

A recent investment trust launch attracted only £20 million of new money after IFAs failed to support it. Similar launches in the past have pulled in more than £200 million. M&G still has a total of £16 billion under management and more than 700,000 client accounts.

Mr McLintock said M&G's performance had improved recently, and its practice of buying up higher yielding companies is beginning to pay off.

In the first three months of this year, the time when most investors take out Peps, M&G took only £150 million into Peps, despite its annual £9 million spend on advertising. Last year it took more than £300 million in the period.

Clive Scott-Hopkins, marketing director of Towry Law, one of the UK's biggest firms of independent financial advisers, said he had written to David Morgan, the M&G chairman, expressing his dissatisfaction about the "disastrous" performance of the company. He said: "They should put the same emphasis on managing the funds as they do on marketing them." He said he would recommend M&G trusts only if a client specifically asked for M&G.

Lord Lawson was re-elected to the board of Barclays Bank yesterday, despite shareholder anger over his endorsement of a rival company. He is reputed to have received £100,000 for appearing in the M&G advertisements while he was a non-executive director of Barclays.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	4346.1 (+17.4)
FTSE All Share	3725.2 (+5.77)
Nikkei	18544.45 (-7.21)
Dow Jones	8705.96 (+45.75)
S&P Composite	763.32 (+2.95)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5.75% (5.75%)
Long Bond	94.75% (94.75%)
Yield	7.07% (7.07%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month bank bill	9.75% (9.75%)
6-month bank bill	10.25% (10.25%)
12-month bank bill	10.75% (10.75%)

STERLING	
New York	1.6365 (1.6365)
London	1.6365 (1.6365)
DM	2.8000 (2.8000)
FF	9.4500 (9.4500)
Sfr	2.3824 (2.3824)
Yen	205.55 (205.55)
£ index	100.1 (100.1)

DOLLAR	
London	1.7140 (1.7140)
DM	5.7850 (5.7850)
Sfr	1.4890 (1.4890)
Yen	126.20 (126.20)
£ index	103.7 (103.7)

TOKYO CLOSE YAN 126.08	
Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$18.20 (\$18.45)
SOL	
London close	\$341.56 (\$342.25)

FLOODED	
Underwriters at the Lloyd's of London insurance market are taking seriously the risk of severe flooding caused by global warming and coastal erosion, especially along the east coast. Page 30	

STORE OPENINGS	
DFS, the soft furnishings group based in Doncaster, is planning to open up to 20 new stores during the next three years and to boost its presence in London and the South East. Page 31, Tempus 32	

KPMG criticised on 'black hole'

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

KPMG, the auditor, has survived harsh criticism from a minority of NatWest Bank's shareholders in spite of its failure to detect a £90 million "black hole" for more than two years.

At a sometimes stormy annual meeting in London yesterday shareholders repeatedly called for KPMG to be dismissed. However, although KPMG was rejected on a show of hands, City institutions voted overwhelmingly in a subsequent ballot to back the auditor.

Lord Alexander of Weedon, chairman of NatWest, said he understood the concerns raised by shareholders over the "black hole" in the interest rate derivatives division. However, he insisted that "in the interests of natural justice" nothing could

be decided until the conclusion of an internal report in about four weeks. He indicated that if the report were critical of KPMG the position would be reviewed.

The role of auditors has been under scrutiny after, first, Morgan Grenfell's unit trust problems and then the NatWest incident. In the NatWest case, KPMG was not expected to pull apart all of the bank's trading deals, but rather to test different market positions.

Lord Alexander said NatWest was consulting unions as it proceeded with the creation of a "new UK retail bank" that could see a further 10,000 job cuts by the end of the decade.

Pennington, page 31
City Diary, page 33

A&L shares close under auction low

By CAROLINE MERRELL

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER shares fell 33p yesterday to end the day at 533p.

The fall in the price was put down to some profit-taking, but is bound to disappoint many private investors who bought shares on Monday when the price hit 576p. Sixty-five million shares changed hands - this figure included the 52 million shares sold at the second of three auctions held by Cazenove, the broker. The auctions are dealing with the 27 per cent of shareholders who opted to sell their shares immediately.

The average price of the shares at the second auction was 551p. The highest price paid was 575p, while the lowest was 534p. Sellers will get the average price from all auctions.

Halifax could fuel £1bn spree

By ANNE ASHWORTH

THE first Saturday in June promises to go down in retail history as thousands of Halifax borrowers and savers have their first chance to spend their long-awaited demutualisation windfalls.

As much as £1 billion could be ready for spending on June 7 - even if only 10 per cent of the 7.6 million beneficiaries opt to cash in their part of the £12 billion free share distribution at the earliest opportunity.

Stock market dealings in Halifax shares will start on Monday, June 2. But those who opt to sell through the first auction of shares to institutional investors on May 30, will be able to withdraw the proceeds from their accounts on Friday, June 6, ready to hit car showrooms, clothing and

furniture stores and travel agencies the next day.

The Halifax said it had put a special mechanism in place to ensure that its customers did not suffer if there was a market setback during its first days as a quoted company.

Next Monday, it will publish a "floor" price for the shares. If the market price drops below that, customers who have opted to sell immediately will be asked to reconfirm their intention.

The floor price will be above the 390p quoted in January as the lowest estimate. The mid-price was 420p. On present market conditions, James Johnson, of Credit Lyonnais Laing, sees a mid-price of 450p. That means the average windfall will be worth £1,400.

Conran sells a million Fitch shares

By OLIVER AUGUST



Conran: sentimental attachment

SIR Terence Conran, the millionaire designer and restaurateur, has added £400,000 to his fortune by selling a million shares in Fitch, the design consultancy he rescued and nurtured through the last recession.

The profit is modest by the standards of his fortune, estimated at £105 million. The design guru's advisers eagerly insisted that he had not lost faith in the company, a 1980s icon that almost went bust in 1992.

Sir Terence still has a 21 per cent stake worth £3.4 million. An investment trust managed by Robert Fleming bought his shares. The trust now holds a 7.8 per cent stake after also

buying a 3.6 per cent holding from two directors, Bernard Roux and Jean François Bentz.

Des Gunewardena, another director and close business associate of Sir Terence, said the sale was a sign of how well Fitch was doing. He said: "There is a lot of demand for Fitch shares and very few holders. Sir Terence satisfied that demand to get some liquidity into the company. That's the reason, not a loss of faith."

Fitch has been accelerating almost as fast as its latest design, for the McLaren Formula One car, which won the first grand prix this year. In the UK, profits recovered 67.4 per cent to

£914,000. Earnings per share grew almost 30 per cent last year.

Sir Terence is said to have a sentimental attachment to Fitch, not least because of his friendship with Rodney Fitch. But Sir Terence's own designer talents are currently employed in Marylebone, central London, where he will open a shop and restaurant called "Orrey" this autumn.

The Fitch recovery is being attributed to two factors: the disastrous property purchase in the King's Cross area of London was reversed in 1995 and new media techniques were imported from America, where Fitch does 75 per cent of its business.

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Nomura faces three-month suspension

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN
IN TOKYO

THE Japanese Finance Ministry is likely to suspend some of Nomura Securities' operations for about three months as a punishment for making illegal payments to racketeers, a leading Japanese news agency reported yesterday.

It is understood that the Ministry plans to bar Nomura, traditionally the world's largest stockbroker, from trading on its own account — a business that last year earned the company a quarter of its revenue, or \$1.8 billion.

A three-month suspension would be the heaviest punishment ever imposed on a stockbroker.

The suspension will also be applied to Nomura's first corporate section, which diverted funds to Ryuichi Koike, a "sokaiya" (corporate racketeer) in the early 1990s.

The sokaiya extorts money from corporations by threatening to pose embarrassing questions at shareholder meetings. Police estimate that as many as a quarter of leading Japanese companies pay these bribes to save face.

Hideo Sakamaki, Nomura's former president, said yesterday that

the brokerage paid more than 70 million yen (£46,000) through irregular stock deals to an account linked to the racketeer.

Mr Sakamaki, who stepped down from his post in March to take the blame for the payoff scandal, was giving testimony to a parliamentary committee.

The Japanese group, meanwhile, announced a sweeping reshuffle of its top management in a move to restore public confidence. Junichi Ujio, 51, the managing director, was promoted to the post of president. Nomura's top ten executives will be downgraded, including the chairman, Masashi

Suzuki, 61, who has served concurrently as president since Mr Sakamaki's resignation.

The Finance Ministry is waiting for the findings of an investigation by prosecutors and the Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission before deciding a penalty.

Japan's down-trodden small shareholders have won a small, but potentially significant victory in an uphill battle to make Japanese management more accountable, more open and less corrupt.

Executives of the nation's oldest department store, Takashimaya, agreed to repay 170 million yen to the

company to compensate for payoffs to extortionists.

The question raised by the Takashimaya case is whether it will prompt other leading companies to treat ordinary investors with greater respect. Japan's business culture discourages intervention from individual shareholders.

They have no say in shareholders' meetings, and are quickly silenced if they try to raise questions that might embarrass management. Analysts say the Takashimaya settlement is exceptional.

Murky present, page 33

Insurers concerned at growing flood risks

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

SEA LEVELS around the British Isles are forecast to rise by as much as 40cm over the next 50 years, rendering homes by some coasts and rivers almost insurable.

An international conference of underwriters and insurance companies will be held next month that the combination of global warming and natural coastal erosion could lead to a greater risk of flooding in the coming decades.

Some homeowners by the coast, particularly in Kent, Norfolk, the South East and North East of England, and in London near the Thames barrier, could find themselves blacklisted by insurers. Some insurers estimate that the cost to the economy of serious flooding in London could be as high as £10 billion.

Dr Andrew Dilgolecki, a general manager of General Accident and an authority on global warming, said cities like York and Hull were also at risk from flooding if sea levels rose. "Severe storms could raise the sea level even higher than 40cm above its normal height for a short period, with terrible results — as residents of Towyn, north Wales, discovered in 1990."

According to Dr Mike Hulme of the Climatic Research Unit the worst-affected area of Britain will be the South East of England. Dr Hulme, a keynote speaker at the conference in London in a fortnight, will tell insurers and reinsurers from around the world that sea levels will rise on a global scale by 25cm over the next 50 years.

However, because the British Isles is tilting and gradually sinking in the South of England and rising in Scotland through natural geological changes, the South East of England will see the greatest change. Dr Hulme said: "An increase of 40cm will not be discernible to a beachlover. However, combined with strong windstorms or high tides, sea defences could be more easily breached."

NatWest Insurance Services, which uses a panel of underwriters, believes that low-lying coastal areas could become red-lined by insurers. David Lennan, head of NatWest's insurance division, said: "Over the last decade the insurance industry has been gathering very detailed information about the geological structure of Britain. Armed with this, underwriters may decide to refuse cover for homes in regions where frequent flooding or coastal erosion is likely and the price of these homes is also likely to go down."

The conference, *Changing Weather Patterns* to be held at the London Underwriting Centre, was established after the hurricane of 1987 to educate the industry about the effects of climate change. Insurers and reinsurers from Europe and the United States are expected to attend.

Bonus for loyal B&B borrowers

BY ANNE ASHWORTH

THE Bradford & Bingley Building Society is to give a 0.2 per cent discount to 250,000 borrowers of more than two years' standing. The move is the latest in the society's campaign to "make mutually meaningful" in the face of the four-figure windfalls being distributed to members of societies that are becoming banks.

Borrowers who benefit from the reduction will pay a rate equivalent to 6.79 per cent, 0.46 per cent below the Halifax's standard variable mortgage rate.

The Bradford & Bingley estimated that the saving was worth £230 over a year and £1,000 over five years on a £50,000 loan. In recent years, lenders have concentrated on attracting new borrowers rather than rewarding loyal customers.



Brian Edwards, managing director, left, and Miles Emley at St Ives's plant in Kent

St Ives printing in top gear

BY CHRIS AYRES

ST IVES, the book and magazine printing company that specialises in producing junk mail, lifted interim pre-tax profits nearly 20 per cent to £23.5 million for the 26 weeks ended January 31.

Turnover rose from £165.7 million to £183.3 million, and earnings were up 18.1 per cent to 15.79p a share. An interim dividend of 3.4p (2.9p) will be paid on June 2.

Miles Emley, chairman, said St Ives had enjoyed a good performance in the UK and abroad, but had suffered from continued printing press problems in South Wales.

He said: "We're improving the plant's performance, but there is still a little way to go

yet. We're working with the suppliers to overcome the problems." St Ives, which also produces magazines, books and compact disk inlay cards, says it has benefited from the recent closure of Donnelly's printing plant at York. The company has recently won contracts to print *Vogue* and *Top Gear* magazines, which used to be produced at the rival plant.

Meanwhile, book sales showed weak growth, and export sales of Bibles continued to be hit by the strength of the pound.

The Permuter Printer Company, which St Ives bought in September for \$35 million from its own reserves, performed in line with expectations.

L&G unveils £400m plan to develop heart of Bracknell

BY PAUL DURNAN

THE property arm of Legal & General has unveiled a £400 million plan to develop a new shopping and leisure centre in the heart of Bracknell.

The development, which will cover 1.25 million sq ft, will eventually create 4,000 permanent jobs if it goes ahead. Building work will create another 2,000 jobs over the next five years.

With the Government clamping down on new out-of-town shopping centres, the project is seen as a coup for Legal & General and its development partners. The developers claim the building of the Bracknell complex will be one of the largest construction projects in Britain over the next few years.

Stephen Mundy, property director of Legal & General's life fund, said the planning proposals incorporated all the latest guidelines laid down by the Department of the Environment. The proposals have the "full support" of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

The plans to regenerate Bracknell's ageing town centre include a 14-screen cinema, a children's entertainment centre and a new civic complex. This will provide offices for the new unitary local authority, a police station, a Magistrates' court, a library and a bus station.

Mr Mundy said the developers have already approached potential "anchor tenants" for the shopping centre, including Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, House of Fraser, C&A, BHS and Alders.

Mr Mundy dismissed an attempt by Allied London Properties, a small quoted property company, to block the plans. Allied London also owns property in Bracknell but, according to Mr Mundy, would be unable to prevent the council using its compulsory purchase powers. "The scheme is really the first of the new generation of schemes coming forward under the new set of planning guidelines," said Mr Mundy. "From day one, we have worked on the basis that the scheme must conform."

Legal & General hopes to secure planning permission in 1998, and to begin clearing the site the following year. The new centre should open for trading from 2002.

London and Easter Properties are acting as development managers, and the architects are Chapman Taylor Partners.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Eight-year high for McCarthy & Stone

A RESURGENCE in demand for retirement housing in the six months over the new year has helped McCarthy & Stone, the retirement housebuilders, to return its unit sales 25 per cent to 443 houses in the half year to February 28, with houses selling at an average price of £68,000 (£63,400). After a £1.5 million boost from its portfolio of freehold interests, McCarthy & Stone's pre-tax profits were £6 million, up from £2.1 million, with headline earnings at 2.2p a share, compared with 0.6p a share previously.

Matthew Thorne, finance director, said the momentum should be sustained for the rest of the year, with visitor and reservations rates already up 35 per cent. He said: "We don't see any reason why this should come to an end. We are expecting a modest rise in interest rates. Thereafter I think the upturn will carry on through to 1998." He added that the company was beginning to see pressure on land prices, but had so far managed to negotiate stable rates on both land and building materials. An interim dividend of 0.6p (0.55p) is due on July 1.

Tempos, page 32

Competition threatened

UNITED AIRLINES, the American airline, is to tell an American senate sub-committee that the proposed alliance between British Airways and AMR Corporation's AMR airline represents an unprecedented threat to global competition. Cyril Murphy, vice-president of international affairs at United will also tell the senate committee: "BA and American are the two biggest carriers at the most uncompetitive airport in Europe — Heathrow. Together these two carriers will dominate traffic."

BA wins award

BRITISH AIRWAYS has won this year's award for best environmental reporting. Peter Langard, president of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which sponsors the awards, said: "British Airways' efforts clearly demonstrated the growing importance that companies are attaching to innovation in corporate environmental reporting." Other environmental awards went to London Electricity, J Sainsbury, Inveresk, and Shared Earth.

Innovative job for Noble

JAMES NOBLE, the former finance director of British Biotech, has joined the board of Innovative Technologies as a non-executive director. A spokesman for the wound-care company said Mr Noble will be involved in setting strategy, corporate development and acquisitions. Roy Smith, previously with Johnson & Johnson in the UK, has joined as commercial director and deputy chief executive. Shares in Innovative fell 21p to 310p yesterday as its annual losses deepened to £4 million (£2.7 million) on sales up to £1.44 million (£190,000).

Dow Jones deal likely

DOW JONES, the American media group that owns *The Wall Street Journal*, said it probably will buy the 30 per cent stake in the European Business News channel that is owned by Flextech, the cable and satellite TV programmer. Dow Jones owns the other 70 per cent. EBN, launched in early 1995, is available in 23 million cable and satellite homes in the UK and continental Europe, but draws only about 73,000 viewers a day. Flextech recently agreed to invest about £140 million in a joint programming venture with the BBC.

Cosalt plans acquisitions

COSALT, the Grimsby group, is planning big acquisitions in its safety equipment and workwear divisions over the next year to give it more focus. Bill Wood, managing director, said Cosalt would never deal in property again after its troubled residential development at North Shields, Tyne and Wear. Yesterday, it announced a 48 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.65 million for the half year to March 2. Turnover was up 23 per cent to £4.6 million and earnings per share were up 41 per cent to 8.72p. An interim dividend of 4.1p (3.0p) will be paid on August 29.

New factory for Wales

MATSUSHITA Electronic Components unveiled plans for a new £13 million factory at Port Talbot, South Wales, that will create 285 jobs. The plant will be built alongside the existing operation, which makes electronic equipment for the consumer and office markets. The entire workforce will transfer to the new plant next January after which Matsushita will start making car speakers. This move into the automotive sector is the result of an agreement by the parent company in Japan to supply audio components to Ford.

NHP buys seven homes

NURSING HOME PROPERTIES, which specialises in the purchase and leaseback of nursing homes, yesterday bought seven homes with a total of 457 beds for £12.6 million. The group now has 63 homes. The acquisition raises the amount invested in its homes to more than £116 million. The group has also completed a £100 million securitisation issue — the first of its kind for care home leases in the UK — that will allow it to invest a further £50 million. NHP said a capital restructuring related to the issue could delay its dividend payment four weeks.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Sells	Sells	Sells	Sells
Australia \$	2.20	Malta	0.856
Austria Sch	20.45	Netherlands Gld	3.300
Belgium Fr	60.26	New Zealand \$	2.50
Canada \$	2.384	Norway Kr	12.02
Cyprus Cyp	0.888	Portugal Esc	200.50
Denmark Kr	11.11	S Africa Rd	7.94
Finland Mk	8.90	Spain Ptas	245.50
France Fr	9.78	Sweden Kr	13.21
Germany Dm	2.83	Switzerland Fr	2.50
Greece Dr	459	Turkey Lira	22378
Hong Kong \$	13.37	USA \$	1.730
Ireland P	1.10		
Israel Sh	5.82		
Italy Lira	2914		
Japan Yen	219.10		

Rates for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Waigel raises Eurofighter hopes

BRITISH AEROSPACE and other manufacturers involved in Eurofighter's development have been given fresh hope by Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, who holds the purse strings on the project that could create 10,000 jobs in Britain (Oliver August writes).

Herr Waigel said defence

experts had told him that Germany needed the £125 million aircraft. He previously vetoed an order for 180 of them to protect his budget ahead of monetary union.

Herr Waigel said about the aircraft: "If we need it, it should be built in Germany because we have already spent

billions of marks on research and development and because we have clear agreements with several European countries."

Bae is awaiting the green light from Bonn to proceed with the production of 630 aircraft at its plant in Warton, Lancashire. The British Gov-

ernment ordered 232 Eurofighters last September.

According to Herr Waigel, a final decision on the short and medium-term financing of the project will be made by this July. The Finance Ministry is locked in talks with the Defence Ministry over the Eurofighter.

Mortgage lender can keep licence

BY SARA MCCONNELL

THE Mortgage Corporation, the mortgage lender, will be allowed to keep its credit licence after a two-year investigation by the Office of Fair Trading into complaints that it harassed borrowers who fell behind with repayments.

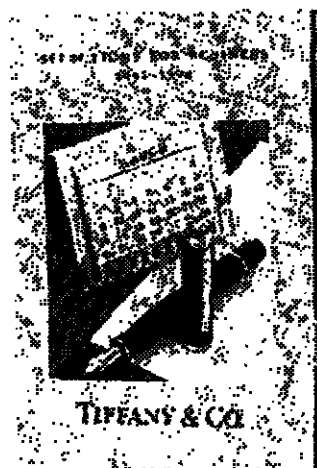
But the lender is effectively on probation and any breach of undertakings made to the OFT could still result in its licence being revoked.

The Mortgage Corporation, previously owned by Salomon Brothers, the Wall Street banking firm, was threatened with the loss of its licence in June 1995. Local trading standards officers reported receiving more than 300 complaints from borrowers alleging harassment. Tactics were said to

include threats to repossess after borrowers fell just a few hundred pounds in arrears.

The lender, now part of First National Building Society of Ireland, has promised the OFT that it will abide by its revised policies on arrears handling and staff training. It will also set up a complaints procedure which is run independently of its arrears collection department. It will be expected to report to John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, every six months for the next two years, giving details of any complaints.

The OFT said that "important changes put in place by the Mortgage Corporation had satisfied [it] that the company remained fit to hold its licence".



Corporate Culture

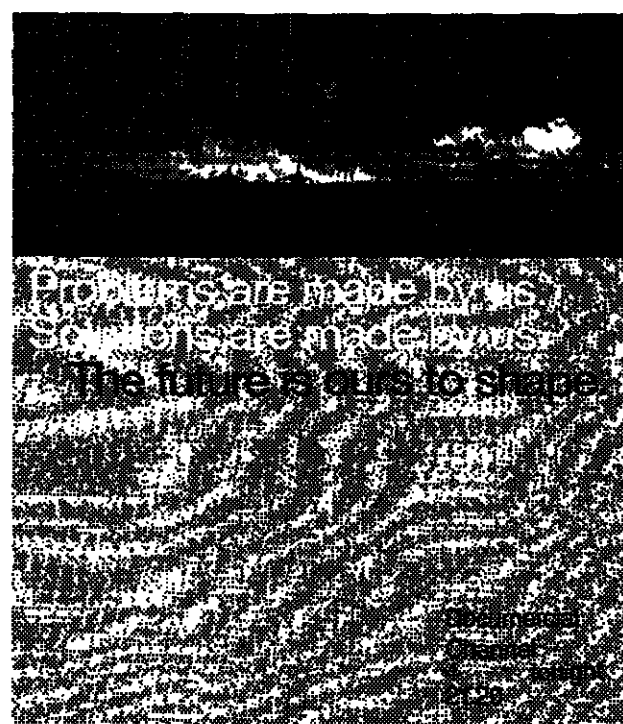
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"Where can I sell my beautiful home?"

See p.24

□ NatWest managers more culpable than KPMG □ Time to pick up the board over Penguin □ Unilever as a solution

Don't shoot the auditor

□ RARELY do auditors suffer the indignity of being sacked from their posts and there was never really any doubt over KPMG's survival as the firm to sign off National Westminster's accounts. The show of hands from irate investors at the bank's annual meeting yesterday would have had them out on their ears but Lord Alexander had a mountain of proxy votes in his pocket to ensure the firm held on to this chunky bit of business.

The people who make the pilgrimage to annual general meetings are a special breed, prepared to sit through long speeches, tedious questions and increasingly often that ultimate horror, the company video. Their knowledge of accounts may be limited. But what was clear at NatWest yesterday was their touching, and misplaced, belief in the auditor as their protector.

These simple souls take the view that if the books are wrong to the tune of £90 million, then the chaps from KPMG should spot that something is amiss. They find it hard to imagine, even after the Barings debacle, that a maverick trader could distort the figures to such an extent without being discovered.

But that is the danger of the new markets that the investment

banks have embraced so enthusiastically. NatWest is now embarking on its inquest into what failings of control led to its stumbling into such a black hole but, no matter how deep the probing goes, the answer will inevitably point to a failure in management controls.

There are many instances when auditors could and should be held culpable for losses that must, eventually, be paid for by shareholders. The debacle at Wickes is one that certainly raises issues over the role of those who so trustingly signed off the accounts. At NatWest, however, the shareholders had the wrong target in their sights. Although KPMG collected more than £14 million from the bank last year, that would be nowhere enough to pay for the amount of time necessary for the operations to be scrutinised in a way guaranteed to pick up the problem in its early stages. Only management can fulfil that role. What shareholders now need to be assured of, not just at NatWest

but at the other gambling dens in the City, is that the lines of responsibility are clear and the policing systems are effective.

Bringing Pearson to book

□ NEXT week, Pearson shareholders will have their first chance to question the board about one of the oddest events in the company's history, the apparently profitless fraud at Penguin Books in the US. When the affair was first revealed, the company was able to get away with bland assurances that laid any wrongdoing at the door of a single, junior female employee. This explanation never really hung together then, and it seems even less likely now.

The internal inquiry into the affair is largely complete. It has emerged that there was an unspecified number of other employees who were either involved or even instigated it. The question is just how far up the



chain of command responsibility might stretch, Pearson insiders remain convinced that Peter Mayer, former boss at Penguin, was in the dark about the deception but, in corporate terms, does that render him entirely blameless?

The good news is that the company is fully confident that the £100 million charge set aside to cover the "improper accounting", as we must call it, will be enough. Small bookshops in the US have been crucified by discounting from large chains such as Barnes & Noble, who gained from the affair. They may see the matter as an ideal case

belli to take their grievances to court, but Pearson is confident it can keep the lid on their claims.

We are still no clearer as to why those involved set up the scam, paying unofficial discounts that appeared to benefit no one at Penguin.

The closest parallel this side of the Atlantic was the £30 million "black hole" at Wickes. Although, like Mr Mayer, the Wickes chairman, Henry Sweetbairn, was in no way to blame, he still repaid £720,000 in profit-related bonuses, and his former finance director another £485,000. So how much of Mr Mayer's salary over the years has been profit-related?

City looking for 'big idea' from ICI

□ MAKING an impact at ICI is no minor task. Sir John Harvey-Jones found that flowing locks and flamboyant ties helped; Sir Denis Henderson opted for a lower key, but arguably more

effective, approach. The present incumbent, Charles Miller Smith, has still to make his mark and, two years after his recruitment from Unilever, the City is anxious for evidence of what his regime may achieve. Tomorrow's first-quarter results are likely to offer a similar serving of gloom from price pressures and a surging pound that has dogged a company which, so far, seems unable to offer a radical way of lifting itself from the old-style problems of cyclical business.

But without resorting to a Harvey-Jones-style tap dance, Miller Smith should be able to inject a little optimism into his performance. The suggestion that he would take over all or part of Unilever's chemical businesses would indicate that he intends to be a positive force in building ICI's future. This would be a move further into the consumer-led market that ICI needs to be targeting. ICI could afford all four of the chemicals businesses Unilever is selling and that would add to its

attractions as a buyer for Unilever, who would be keen to make a clean sale.

Without a Unilever buy or something of similar magnitude, industry watchers will grow impatient for action. True, ICI has been shedding operations, preparing to float the pigments division Tioxide and taking an axe to its costs, while talking of stretching its portfolio and cutting its exposure to industrial chemicals, which are the hostage of cyclical markets. But while it speaks of selling to raise a war chest for moving some of its operations into more consumer-oriented areas, its cheque book seems woefully underused. It could easily rustle up the £4 billion Unilever may want.

Regan-omics

□ THE extent of the internal support that Andrew Regan has secured in his attempt to take over the CWS is now embarrassingly clear. The documents Allan Green poured into court yesterday would have overwhelmed many a corporate finance department. Regan is a sharp operator who spotted an opportunity, but his tactics and choice of willing associates, look more than unfortunate.

DFS continues store expansion as profits rise

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

DFS, the soft furnishings group based in Doncaster, is planning to open up to 20 stores during the next three years and to boost its presence in London and the South East. Sir Graham Kirkham, chairman, who is a noted Conservative Party supporter and whose son controversially donated £4 million to the party, was sanguine about the prospect of a Labour government. "We have to maximise our options whoever is in power. What will be will be," he said.

The company yesterday reported a 23.6 per cent jump in pre-tax profit to £18.7 million in the six months to January 25. Turnover was up 43.9 per cent to £126.3 million, largely because of sales from newly opened stores. Like-for-like sales were up just 3.3 per cent.

The group had 40 stores at the half year. It has opened 16 in the last two-and-a-half years, and its first stores in Greater London were opened during the last year. Further branches are set to open in the next few months at Leicester, Birmingham and Enfield. Talks are going on to open in Slough, Brighton, Thurrock and Poole.

Capital expenditure is expected to rise from £12 million to £15



Kirkham: special dividend

million this year, with spending concentrated on new stores. The company has spent £4.5 million so far this year on freeholds and long leaseholds. Sir Graham said that he saw scope for 13 or 14 stores in the London area, compared with the six or seven he had originally envisaged. The long-term aim is to have about

100 stores nationwide. He said market conditions had not improved perceptibly. "We have never relied on a buoyant economy to get our growth. Over 28 years we have traded through good, bad and mixed conditions."

He said that acquisitions were unlikely for the group. However, it will consider using its cash to pay for another special dividend at the end of the year. Last November it paid £10.4 million in a special dividend. However, Sir Graham said DFS is keen to retain cash in order to buy freeholds.

Analysts edged up their full-year pre-tax profit forecasts, with Panmure Gordon shifting from £38.2 million to £38.5 million.

The company has £21.9 million cash which may be bolstered by £22.8 million from a VAT rebate. The payment depends on a House of Lords ruling expected this year concerning Primbeck, a privately owned London retailer, which has claimed that Customs and Excise overcharged it for VAT on interest-free credit schemes.

Earnings per share were 11.84p (9.59p). An interim dividend of 3.9p (3.1p) is payable on June 19.

City Diary, page 33

EMI up amid renewed talk of being bid target

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

EMI shares jumped sharply yesterday after reports that it had broken off merger talks with Seagram prompted renewed bid speculation.

The music company's shares closed up 26p at £12.02, as traders gambled that Seagram, which owns the MCA music business, might now consider a hostile bid. Bid speculation has sent

EMI shares on a rollercoaster ride since the company split from Thorn last summer. The shares peaked at £14.85 after demerger before hitting a low of £10.97 earlier this year.

EMI refused to comment yesterday on the merger talks, although it is understood to have held discussions with Seagram for a short period earlier this year. EMI is considered a good fit for Seagram as its strength

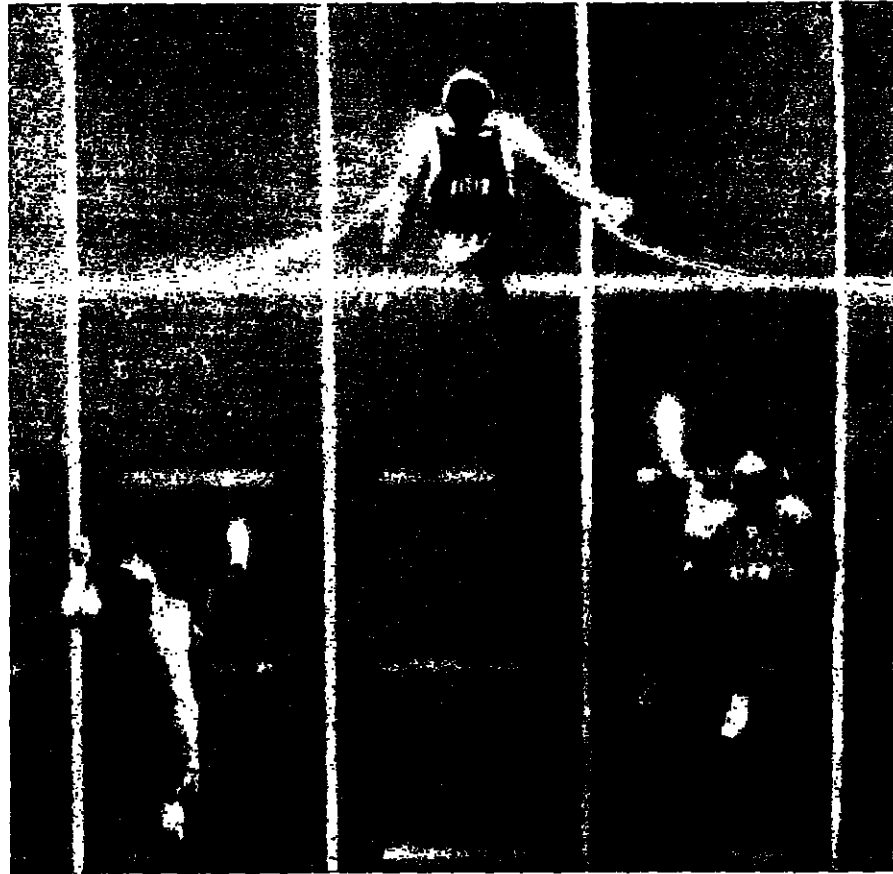
lies in Europe and emerging markets, while MCA sales are concentrated in America. But the market has not ruled out bids emerging from other American media giants including Viacom, Walt Disney, or Microsoft.

PolyGram, one of EMI's main music rivals, hinted at an improvement in the global music market as it reported a 9 per cent increase in first-quarter music sales. The success of

Pop, U2's new album, which has sold five million copies worldwide, helped the music division's operating profits to rise 19 per cent to 251 million guineas (£80 million).

But the company, which is UK based but Dutch owned, reported an overall fall of 1.6 per cent in first-quarter profits to 122 million guineas because of a disappointing performance from its film division.

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Delay for France Telecom

JEAN ARTHUIS, the French Finance Minister, said he had decided to delay the sale of shares in France Telecom by four weeks because of the early elections (Our City Staff writes). He said that the partial privatisation, which could be France's biggest, needed an important public relations campaign which was difficult to conduct with an election campaign.

Jacques Chirac, the French President, announced on Monday a snap two-round parliamentary election for May 25 and June 1. M Arthuis said that, under a new timetable, the period that French individuals can make reservations for shares will start around June 5.

The initial public offer period will start on June 24 and end on July 1.

MSB plays down fears over 2000 bug

BY FRASER NELSON

MSB, the computer services contractor which joined the market last May, has played down the impact of the Year 2000 bug, and has dismissed as "ridiculous" reports of an exponential surge in contractors' salaries.

The company said that salary growth had not broken its five-year trend of 5 per cent, and was showing no signs of gathering pace in preparation for the millennium problem.

Mark Goldberg, managing director, said the company had seen very little revenue from the Year 2000 problem so far - in spite of recent forecasts that UK businesses will have to spend £31 billion on hiring programmers to deal with the bug.

He said: "We have 1,600 contractors and only a hand-

ful are working on the millennium problem. We are excited about the millennium, but that is a small proportion of our real spread. It will grow as a proportion, but will certainly not dominate. People will be surprised at how much business will carry on as usual."

The increase in its reserve of contractors, which has more than doubled from 900 last year, helped pre-tax profit to jump from £3.42 million to £5.43 million in the year to January 31, as earnings grew from 12p to 17.6p a share.

The company's 75 salesmen found work for an average of 25 contractors each - twice the industry average - and it plans to take on a further 50 salesmen this year.

A final dividend of 4p makes a 6p total, due on May 30.

Strength of sterling costs SmithKline Beecham £41m

BY ERIC REGULY

THE strong pound reduced the earnings of SmithKline Beecham by more than £41 million in the first quarter and may cost the pharmaceuticals group £100 million in the full year.

Profits before tax rose 19 per cent to £459 million at constant exchange rates, but the strength of sterling cut actual growth to £418 million, up only 8 per cent. Profits will fall about 6 per cent in the full year if the pound remains at current levels, the company said.

Earnings per share rose 7

per cent to 10.2p in the period and would have climbed 18 per cent if the pound had remained at last year's levels. Overall sales declined 2 per cent to £1.84 billion.

The fall was triggered by a billing change implemented at Diversified Pharmaceuticals Services, the American-managed care business.

Strong sales from new products were behind the underlying sales growth. New products - defined as medicines introduced in the past five years - had sales of £354

million in the quarter, up 40 per cent.

An antidepressant called Seraxat/Paxil, with sales up 49 per cent to £197 million, was one of the star performers. Sales of new vaccines climbed 63 per cent. New paediatric vaccines also helped, along with sales of Nicorette and Nicoderm.

A first-quarter dividend of 4.41p, up from 4p, is to be paid on July 15. The shares closed at 93.3p, up 27p.

Tempus, page 31

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Trials bring tribulations for biotech share prices

BIOTECH companies fell sharply on overnight news from the US that important clinical trials being carried out on a possible cure for multiple sclerosis were worthless.

Auto-immune of Boston admitted that Myloral, its treatment, had performed no better than a placebo during phase III clinical trials. It is the latest in a series of setbacks for US biotech companies.

The news sent shares of Auto-immune tumbling on Wall Street by \$9.4 to \$34.2 and highlighted the pitfalls faced by some of our own biotech companies. Some of them have been enjoying spectacular gains this year.

Among the worst fallers were Cellect, 25p to 55.7p, Chorion, 1.2p to 35.9p, Corcoran International, 10p to 26.3p, and Innovative Technology, 21p to 30p. Sealed Holdings also fell 10p to 41.5p, despite Apax Partners topping up with a further 100,000 shares, taking its total holding to 2.5 million, or 3.29 per cent.

The rest of the equity market continued to be squeezed higher in thin trading after clawing back an opening fall, reflecting the overnight setback for Wall Street.

The FT-SE 100 index closed near its best of the session as the Dow Jones industrial average steamed back with an opening rise of 90 points in early trading.

The index in London closed 17.4 up at 4,346.1. Last night brokers were keeping a close eye on the opinion polls amid claims that the Labour Party's lead was being eroded. The City is worried by the prospect of a hung parliament.

Brokers reported further heavy turnover in Alliance & Leicester after completion of the second institutional auction for shares. It helped to boost total stock market turnover to 669 million shares.

By the close of business 65 million A&L shares had changed hands as the price dropped 33p to 533p. The average price bid this time was 551p, way above Monday's 522p striking price.

Continuing talk of a bid for A&L and persistent demand from the institutions as they attempt to increase their weightings in the stock, are expected to underpin the price in the weeks ahead. There was further selective support for the other banks, with Barclays putting on 6.1p at



Carpetright rose 1.1p for Lord Harris of Peckham, left, with John Kitching, centre, and Ian Sneyd, finance director

£10.35 after its annual meeting, and Royal Bank of Scotland 8p firmer at 552p. NatWest closed 3.1p to 693.1p after its annual meeting. Bank of Scotland, reporting today, eased 11p to 338p.

EMI touched £12.20 before ending 26p dearer at £12.02, as City speculators put it back into play as a takeover target. This latest flurry of specu-

lation followed reports that the group entered bids before Christmas that have since been terminated.

Speculative buying lifted Rediff & Coleman 10p to 823.1p. Once again there is talk of a bid from Unilever. Word is Unilever is poised to sell its specialty chemicals business to ICI, up 7p at 704.1p, for £4 billion and which he

closed up 13p better at 470p. Talk of a bid from Hammerson, unmoved at 430p, continues to do the rounds.

News of margin pressure left MSB International nursing a loss of 22.1p at 407.1p. Alpha Airports rose 9p to 113.1p ahead of results on Friday. Mohamed Al Fayed owns 25 per cent, which he

bought from Granada last November. As part of the deal he agreed not to bid for the rest of the shares until May 5.

Brokers have been focusing attention back on the retail sector following yesterday's impressive numbers from DFS Furniture, up 17p at 549.1p, and the larger than expected windfall obtained by shareholders of the Alliance & Leicester. They are hoping that the increased spending power being offered to building society members as they give up their mutual status could be good news for the high street store groups.

But they may have to wait until after the General Election argues Nick Bubb, retail analyst at MeePee. Sales of white goods have remained reasonably buoyant, but sales of brown goods, furniture and carpet have all been dull, he says.

"I'm more bullish about the future for the big ticket items such as carpets and furniture. Shares of the carpet retailers are all well off their best levels and should be due for a revival", adds Mr Bubb.

Those companies he expects to do best in the months ahead include Allied Carpets, 1p easier at 251.1p and Lord Harris of Peckham's fast growing Carpetright, 1.1p firmer at 522.1p, where John Kitching is managing director. Others expected to benefit are MFI Furniture, 4p off at 139p, Kingfisher, including Comet and B&Q, 2p cheaper at 662.1p, and Dixons, 3.1p lower at 511.1p.

GIIT-EDGED: Investors had to contend with another subdued performance that saw the London market underperform German bunds before closing a couple of ticks lower. There was little evidence to suggest that investors were prepared to open fresh positions ahead of today's auction of £2 billion of Treasury 7 per cent 2002.

The June series of the long gilt finished a tick down at £109.32 as a total of 34,000 contracts were completed. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 shed £1.16 at £102.32, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 slipped a tick to £102.2.

NEW YORK: Strength in a handful of issues, including Minnesota Mining, General Electric and Procter & Gamble, took the Dow Jones industrial average higher in the morning. By midday it was 45.75 points ahead at 6,705.96.

GOOD SUMMER EXPECTED AFTER EARLY WINDFALL

FT-SE 350 retailers general price index

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A peculiarly Japanese scandal has sunk Nomura Securities into what its humbled chairman describes as "the worst crisis since it was founded". To Nomura's bitter, mostly American, rivals the travails of Japan's biggest and most global securities house are a source of glee. The stockbroker that briefly became the world's biggest at the end of the 1980s could be out of the corporate finance business in its home country for three months.

To outsiders, events unfolding in Tokyo seem bizarre. In 1991, Nomura and other Tokyo houses were exonerated for guaranteeing selected clients against losses when the markets turned sour. Now it appears to be guilty of twin crimes: conducting clients' accounts on a discretionary basis and buying off blackmailers.

Nomura would seem bad in Britain. Both are illegal in Japan because that helps a necessary process of transition in the investment business. Under pressure from American industry and from flag-carrying US investment banks, Japan has spent the past decade reforming itself

Murky present muddies Nomura's global waters

because it was too successful. A pragmatic, manipulated, economy that worked but did not bear legalistic scrutiny is being converted to a more open, rule-based economy. So far, this reform has delivered only bubbles, extended recession and grief. As decades of success gave way to failure, tolerance of dodgy methods has given way to anger and distrust.

For all its apparent modernity and global pretensions, Nomura appears to have been trapped in the past. It is still doing what the powerful bureaucrats of Tokyo were doing ten years ago. It has paid lip-service to reforms but quietly carried on in the old ways.

At home, the public has tired of it. The 1991 scandals seemed to many Europeans an enviable example of brokers looking after their clients. In Japan, those who were not looked

after and suffered the crash were fed up with the cosy old ways. In 1997, Nomura is not the only company to be attacked for allegedly buying off sokaiya racketeers who traditionally disrupt company annual meetings and embarrass directors.

As empty-pocketed private investors operate unless there was plenty of dirt to expose. Paid-off sokaiya also make sure that other shareholders keep quiet and do not rock the boat. Japan's downtrodden small shareholders have just won a small, but potentially significant victory in their uphill battle to make Japanese management more accountable, more open and less corrupt. Executives of Japan's oldest department store, Takashimaya, agreed to repay nearly £1 million to the company to compen-

sate for extortion payments to sokaiya. Two employees of Ajinomoto, Japan's largest food company, have been arrested on suspicion of bribing nine sokaiya. Other offenders include a score of famous names.

Ironically, the resignation of virtually all Nomura's group top managers (albeit only to "adviser" status) is a traditional Japanese penitence. Mrs Watanabe, the backstreet investors who made Nomura great, were deserting in droves. Ritual sacrifices had to be made. This confirms comforting Western clichés about Japan. In Nomura's case, however, it is bound to raise suspicions that the ambitious group may say one thing and do another abroad too.

Junichi Ujiie, the new generation boss, won a university degree in Chicago and ran Nomura's US

operations. But does his semi-outsider status make him clean? The Australian Securities Commission is investigating charges that Nomura in the Far East illegally manipulated the Sydney stock exchange.

Hitoshi Tonomura, Anglophile head of Nomura's European operations, was one of the nine to take the rap. A closer look may now be taken at Nomura's role in four controversial UK deals. It was the enabler of Phoenix Inns, a company that bought two sprawling pub-owning companies from entrepreneur, the secretive alliance between Grand Metropolitan and Fosters. Nomura bought one of three train-owning companies sold cheap by the state. It was the power behind Arlington Homes, which paid £1.7 billion for 57,000 married quarters and is shortlisted to buy Britain's benefit offices in an even bigger state deal.

Potential partners round the globe will watch Tokyo to find out if Nomura's culture is really changing.

GRAHAM SEARJEANT AND ROBERT WHYMAN



ANTHONY HARRIS

Two saints and the long-dead inflation dragon

A very senior friend at the Treasury once said: "What you have to understand is that the Chancellor is not quite sane." That was in late 1990. Fate had chosen a dramatic moment for me to return to this country from a spell in Washington. Britain had just joined the ERM, Mrs Thatcher was in the toilet, and I needed briefing. "John Major," my friend went on (remember the Major Chancellorship?), "is simply obsessed with inflation. He seems to think that nothing else matters."

And not much seems to have changed in the six years since: only last week Major was telling my senior colleagues that he expected to be remembered as the man who killed inflation. Really? Was it Major who stopped inflation in Chile and Argentina, in Spain and Italy — all much bigger falls than here — and who caused prices to fall in Sweden and Switzerland? We must all have been under-estimating the man. Not even Canute's courtiers imagined one ruler could have such wide influence so it is comforting to know that his legacy is in the hands of Gordon Brown, who also talks like an inflation hawk.

Or is that the wrong predator? The plain fact is that inflation died some years ago in virtually every open economy in the world, so "inflation jackal" might be a better term, an unfattering thought inspired by the reappearance in paperback of Roger Bootle's *The Death of Inflation*. Bootle was the first City economist to get the inflation outlook for the 1990s right (though he has not been quite alone).

His new edition is nicely timed. Record share prices, and a localised London house-price boom, have woken the City's inflation jackals from their hibernation. Bootle shows why they are still likely to be wrong. His book is that of a historian rather than of a technical economist (though he seems to be up to speed on the theoretical debates), so it is easily understood by anyone who has experienced the last decade or two. And since it has been proved right before the event, anyone involved

in business planning ought to read it. Plans based on "inevitable" price rises or "cheap" credit can come disastrously unstuck, as the Japanese can testify. What about governments and central bankers? You might think that you can't be too vigilant about inflation; Bootle disagrees. If he is right global trading, labour-shedding and the rise of the service economy have killed the forces that caused post-war inflation; and in that case the price of outdated vigilance (like that of maintaining Trident when there is no Cold War) could be very high. At the lowest, it could mean stifling growth, which would provide jobs and hope — the point Alan Greenspan has grasped, as the Fed experiments with allowing supposed inflationary levels of money and employment growth.

At worst, Bootle fears, overcaution could capsize the boat the other way, tipping us all into slump. Although current events across the Channel look like a timely warning, this remains the most controversial part of his analysis. Could the next bear market start an almost unstoppable deflation, as he fears? It very nearly happened in Japan after the 1990 crash; but supervisors in other major centres would rightly claim that they would never have allowed their banks to become so rickety and corrupt in the first place. My own guess would be that Bootle's fear is overdone; but Gordon Brown may still live to find his dreams haunted by deflation, not inflation.

Does Brown mean what he says, though? Like his leader, he seems to use language to conceal rather than reveal his thoughts; so it is perfectly possible that, for all the talk, he really means to follow the policy of the late 1990s Bundesbank model. If you ever played the old party game of "Do as I do, not as I say," you will have noticed that although Buba talks tough to sustain confidence, it acts soft. It has repeatedly cut interest rates, and is actively pursuing devaluation (so, by the way, are the Swiss). Bootle, then, will hope that Brown proves a good European.

Exporters brace for battering on par with the recession

Strength of the pound is hitting firms, big and small, says

Philip Bassett

The imminent general election has changed the format of the Institute of Directors annual conference today, wiping the usual heavyweight political speeches from the programme. But many in the audience will welcome an escape from the electioneering. Businessmen increasingly are coming to the view that, what ever the make-up of the next government, they have to come to terms with living in a new, and tougher, business environment.

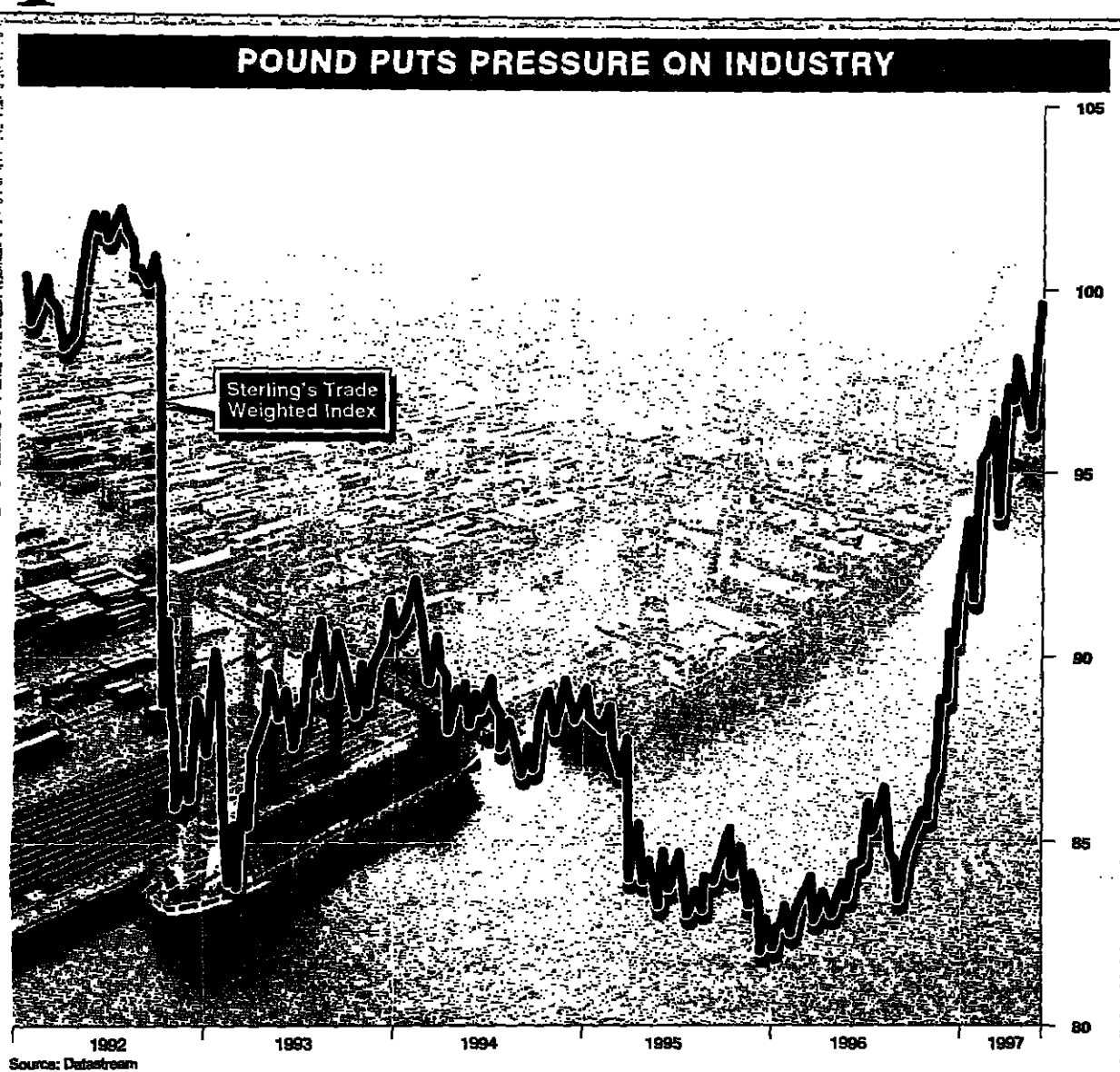
The strength of sterling is now making a real impact on industry and the expectation is that it is not going to lessen after May Day. For many, learning to live with a strong pound is likely to be more of a challenge than coping with life under a Labour government. Paul Freeman, managing director of Sabre Engines, a small company making boat engines in Wimborne, Dorset, said: "We are certainly suffering. Our prices have effectively gone up by 23 per cent. That means we have lost business. We have lost sales — because of the pound."

Like many UK businessmen and companies, he and Sabre are less concerned about the high politics of the general election, or Britain's place in Europe, than they are about what many see as their biggest and most immediate problem: the appreciation of sterling.

Today the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), with the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) to follow tomorrow, will give the last major economic figures, and in particular the last view of Britain's current performance from the perspective of the real economy before polling day.

Recent quarterly trends surveys from the CBI and the BCC have seen continuing optimism and growing output, in line with official figures on the economy suggesting a sustained, if slow, recovery. But in the midst of such confidence have lain worries: in particular, total orders falling back not because of the performance of the economy in Britain but because of the worsening position of exports as the rising pound has sliced away at the competitiveness of UK companies.

Tomorrow's BCC survey is likely to show a further sharp rise in the number of com-



panies citing the exchange rate as a significant external factor in their performance.

"The concern of companies who trade with Europe is clearly increasing," says Kate Barker, the CBI's chief economist, who will join Andrew Buxton, Barclays Bank chairman, in presenting the CBI survey. "Two to three months ago we were talking about squeezes on profits because of sterling. Now companies are talking about doing things — cutting back on work, and business."

Leaders of business bodies such as the CBI and the BCC can see the problem sterling is creating for UK exporters, but they are unsure about what, if any, moves to recommend to counter it. Bank of England officials agree. They see the rise of sterling since last autumn, to the point where the pound is on its trade-weighted index at the level it was in 1992 just before Britain left the European exchange-rate mechanism, as produced by a combination of factors.

Changes in actual and expected interest rates, certainly, although CBI leaders are likely today to maintain their

insistence that rates do not yet need to rise. Shifts in investment, too, to countries such as the UK perhaps less likely to be affected by the uncertainties over economic and monetary union.

Changes in the oil price: a possible increase in the demand for UK products and services, reflecting improvements in quality; and actual, or possible, productivity improvements in the international tradable sector in Britain.

Companies are facing tougher and more direct choices. Take Sabre. Founded in 1968, it now employs 70 people and has a tie-up with Perkins Engines, a Peterborough-based engineering manufacturer. Sixty per cent of Sabre's output goes for export.

Mr Freeman said: "We have ended up putting prices up though we've been discounting as well — trying to spread the impact, 50-50." The company is hoping that new products due out in the summer and pushing more beyond Europe, into areas such as North and South America, will help to bridge the gap in its books caused by what it

regards as the "grossly too high" pound. Or take British Steel, which says the surge in sterling has seriously eroded its competitiveness. BS estimates that about 80 per cent of its sales are market-related, and so affected heavily by sterling's appreciation, especially against Germany's currency, whose own relative weakness reflects the huge economic adjustment of reunification.

Thirty per cent of its sales are in Europe and half in Britain, where it competes against companies pricing in marks. But many companies feeling the pain of sterling's rise are experiencing a gain too: import prices fall as export prices rise with currency change, as BS has found over bringing in raw materials for making steel.

However, the sterling change has been enough to make the City mark down BS's 1996-97 results, due out next month, to probably about £500 million, down from £1.15 billion last time, and has prompted the company to give a warning to unions on the need to seek new productivity improvements, with the prospect of big new job cuts far from ruled out. Such adjustments

are what many companies are now facing, seeing little prospect of sterling's change in the immediate future and with the possible election of a Labour government in particular seen as having little likely effect on the pound's strength.

Companies as diverse as ICI — whose results tomorrow are also likely to reflect the sharp appreciation of sterling — Dorling Kindersley, Salfire, Courtaulds, Lonrho and BTP have voiced their concerns. And many companies have issued profits warnings.

Take another small company as a further example. Powerpacks UK in Solihull, in the West Midlands, makes rechargeable battery packs. It got going in 1992 after Mark Thompson, its founder and managing director, was made redundant. The company now has a workforce of 14 and turnover of about £750,000. Its market balance is better than some, with more than two thirds of its sales into the UK domestic market. But it is still being hit by sterling in its exports, with little alleviation from any lower import prices. "It's getting more difficult," says Mr Thompson.

who is looking at new market initiatives such a drive in possible outlets like hotels to aim battery packs at busy business people with power-hungry mobile phones and laptops. "Margins are squeezed. We are keeping our heads. But it's difficult to plan ahead. It's hard."

Diverse in output all these companies may be, but all are, of course, linked by their exposure to currency fluctuations because of their emphasis on exporting. Ian Campbell, director-general of the Institute of Export, says: "A lot of people are now saying we are going to have to consider seriously whether we can stay in the export market. They are saying 'we can't afford to do this business now'."

Mr Campbell tells how one of the institute's member companies recently returned a subscription renewal. Written across the letter was a note that said: "Dear Ian, What the hell are you doing? Why can't someone do something about sterling — it's KILLING us!"

Such pleas are heartfelt, and widespread, with industry bracing itself for what it sees as a new, long battering on a par with the recessions of the early Eighties and Eighties. While acknowledging that most readjustments will have to be made by companies themselves, and that some will be painful, the institute is arguing too for some policy readjustments, maintaining that the Bank of England, for instance, does not need to be so concerned about possible inflationary dangers and that steps ought to be taken that would help to ease back the pound.

Price, of course, is not the only basis on which British exporters compete. But with a price disadvantage in the scale now offered by the change in sterling, competing on grounds of quality, or reliability, or delivery, or any other factors, is made even tougher in an already tough market, and undermines export confidence — as today's CBI survey will show. And the painful adjustments that a long-term shift in the exchange rate might imply could well feed through from exports, on which the economic recovery in the Nineties has been based, to confidence in the economy more generally.

Mr Campbell said: "We are looking to build markets into the 21st century. And in those markets, a 22 per cent price disadvantage against the Germans is a heck of a hill to climb."

Or as Mr Freeman of Sabre puts it: "We believed for the last couple of years that growth was going to come from exporting more. I'm now starting to doubt that."

Murphy's tip romps home

RORY MURPHY, the general-secretary of the NatWest Staff Association, who failed to secure election to the NatWest board yesterday in spite of popular support from small shareholders, has found another vocation. In his election speech he said the bank had lost £90 million, while all he had lost was £25 at the races. Murphy urged Martin Owen, head of NatWest Markets, to relinquish his directorship, adding that he should back Standdown in the 3.20 at Pontefract yesterday. The nag duly won.

Staple for SIB?

A NEW name is being aired in City circles as the next head of the SIB to succeed Sir Andrew Large. George Staple, who has just returned to private practice after a five-year term as director of the

Serious Fraud Office, is being touted by heavyweight admirers in the Square Mile who feel that the ex-fraudbuster would be an ideal candidate. It would nearly triple his SFO salary, a paltry £105,000.

Kirkham currency

SIR Graham Kirkham, chairman of DFS and one of the Conservative Party's most outspoken and generous supporters, was unusually tongue-tied yesterday when quizzed on politics. He claimed, rather improbably, to have been gagged by Jon Massey, the furniture retailer's chief operating officer. Asked for his view on a single currency, Sir Graham said he didn't care

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Millenium Solutions Theatre

Spelling error

whether a currency is called dollars, sterling, or euros. "If I've got plenty of them, I'll be a lot happier," said the son of a miner, estimated to be worth at least £300 million.

SHAME on Dresner Kleinwort Benson for its contribution to the "Condex UK 97" software convention at London's Earls Court, a good part of which was devoted to the millennium problem. Centrestage in the exhibition hall stood "The Millenium Solutions Theatre".

Heidel's quest

MISSISSIPPI, the US State famous for its swamps and mud pies, has dispatched its first trade mission to the UK. Head of the team is Jimmy Heidel, the American football star, now throwing his weight at the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development. ICI and Reckitt

& Colman are among the UK firms already ensconced in the state. Another 19 British names feature on Heidel's list of hot prospects. "We've got quail, duck, and white-tailed deer hunting for when you're off duty and a hard-working, largely non-unionised workforce for when you're not," he says.

Best behaviour

FOLLOWING allegations that Andrew Regan is the victim of corporate spying, a survey looking at acceptable business practice lands on my desk. According to author Adam Podc, a PhD student at Loughborough University, hiring a professional investigator to ob-

tain information or luring an employee away from a competitor to get specific knowledge is now considered acceptable. "Unless it's seen as illegal, people will do it, or get someone else to do their dirty work for them," he says.

BT flies high

A FLAW in the belief that a culture clash between brash MCI and staid BT is inevitable when their \$30 billion transatlantic phone merger in the autumn is complete. There's one aspect of MCI's culture that BT's top boys seem to adore — company jets. MCI has a small fleet of them; BT has none. Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, has been getting a taste of mile-high luxury. He glided into Madrid last week on an MCI plane to seal BT's deal with Telefonica. BT has every intention of keeping the MCI fleet after the merger.

MORAG PRESTON

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Catalans are feeling heady, not just because of festivals and flowers, but because the region is burgeoning commercially and politically. Michael Knipe reports

Catalonia drives towards the millennium

Both as the capital of the autonomous Spanish region of Catalonia and as a vibrant city in its own right, Barcelona exudes an air of self-confidence that few others in Europe can match.

Senior executives from more than 500 companies in nine European countries recently rated it the city with the best quality of life.

This sense of identity has been inspired, in part at least, by the bold and innovative regeneration of the city initiated by its hosting of the 1992 Olympics and also by the pivotal role once again being played by Catalonia in Spain's political life and its economic recovery.

It is a spirited state of mind, one that will be especially in evidence today as the region celebrates the festival of its patron saint, Sant Jordi, (St George). Men, traditionally, give women red roses; women, in turn, give men books.

The Ramblas, Barcelona's main cultural and social artery, will be ablaze with colour and packed with promenaders. So will the smart modern shopping malls in the rejuvenated old port and the Olympic marina. Similar scenes will occur across the region.

It is just a year since Catalonia's political leaders gave their support to José María Aznar, the leader of Spain's conservative Popular Party, enabling him to become Prime Minister at the head of a minority Government. The

role of power broker was a familiar one for Jordi Pujol, the ex-tycoon leader of the Generalitat, the autonomous regional government of Catalonia. He played the same role to Felipe González, the leader of the Spanish Socialist Party, who also headed a minority Government until last year.

As with the Socialists, Señor Pujol declined the participation of his party, *Convergència i Unió* (CIU), in a coalition cabinet with the victorious PP, saying the CIU would enjoy more "freedom of movement" outside the Government.

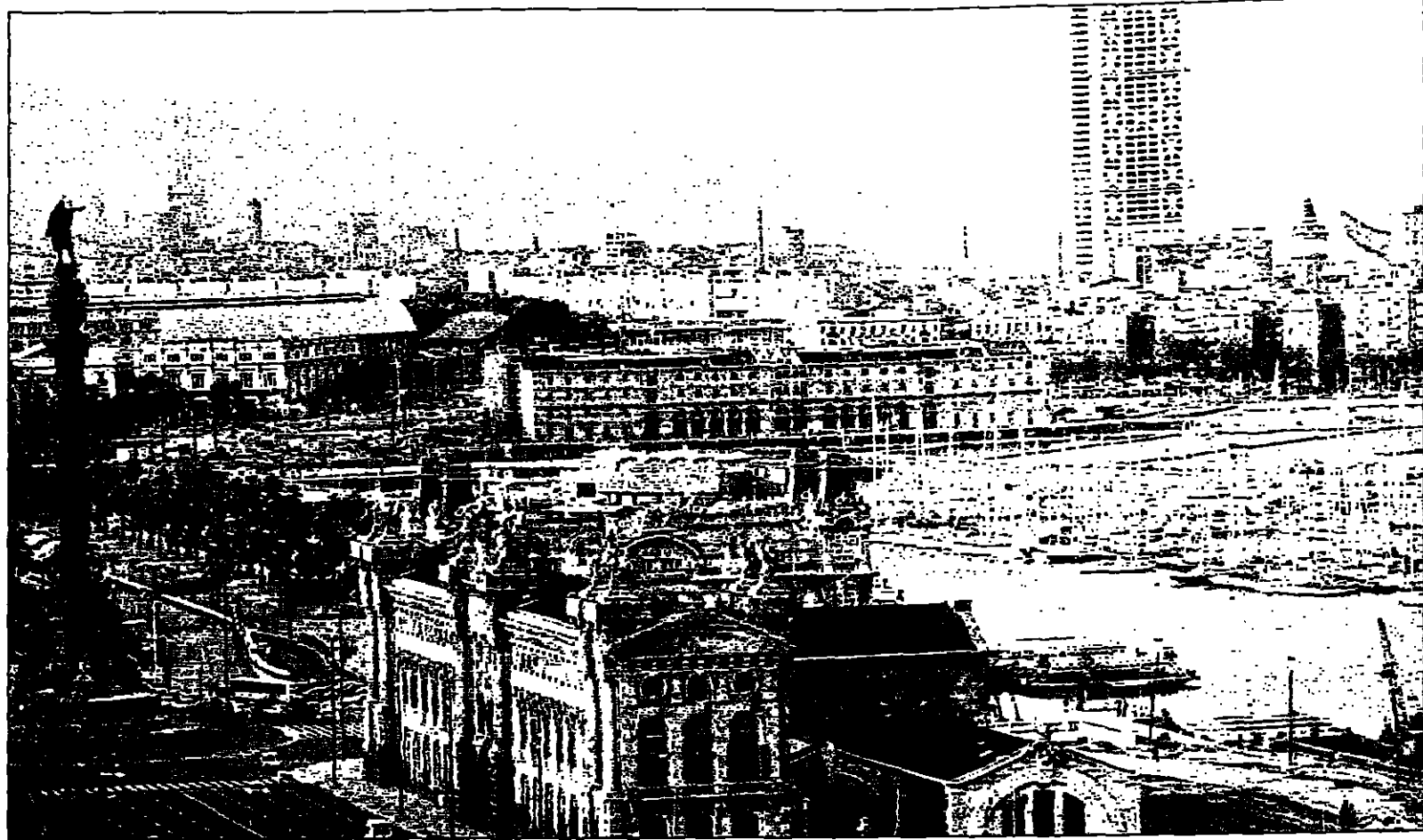
And just as with the Socialists, it has proved fruitful. It has given Spain a stable Government with a ruling party whose philosophy is more in line with the CIU's — and Catalonia has won more valuable improvements to its autonomous status.

Most notably, the amount of income tax returned to the region by the central Government has doubled, to 30 per cent. It has also won promises of further economic concessions, including control of the ports of Barcelona and Tarragona and the transfer of control of the police.

Catalonia has played a key role in the recovery that is enabling Spain to anticipate annual economic growth of 3.2 per cent between now and 2000. With an annual per capita GDP of more than £10,000, most Catalans, especially those in Barcelona, are better off than they might be elsewhere in Spain.



Joan Clos: in waiting



The monument to Columbus, left, overlooks Moll de la Fusta and Port Vell, a focus of Barcelona's wealth, with the customs house in the foreground

The most recent benefit is the central Government's accord with the Generalitat to spend 50 billion pesetas (£212 million) on expanding Barcelona airport. Most of the money will go on construction of a third runway and additional terminal buildings necessitated by the record

growth in human and cargo traffic.

"We still need a lot of investment in infrastructure," says Joan Clos, Barcelona's deputy mayor, who takes over as mayor in September. The investment made to stage the Olympics has paid off, he says. The Olympic Village and har-

bour marina had been sold to the private sector and the profits were being used to finance other projects. The city had gained modern transport links, environmental improvements and cultural facilities.

As a result, business rose significantly. The docks handled 10 per cent more contain-

ers than the previous year and 24 per cent more cruise passengers. Trade fairs last year drew more participants, the number of delegates attending conventions in the city was up by 20 per cent and tourist business rose by 15 per cent.

At the old port of Vell at the bottom of the Ramblas, work has restarted on the construction of a £100 million World Trade Centre. The area is already a great tourist attraction featuring Europe's biggest aquarium, cinemas, shops and restaurants.

A welcome result of this economic upturn is fewer unemployed. Barcelona's jobless rate was cut to 9.4 per cent — five points lower than the national rate, the highest in Europe — and 13 per cent down on the total number in 1995. But it remains the single most pressing problem.

Economic analysts say that at least part of the problem is the lack of flexibility in the labour market, but the main trade unions and business associations are now reaching agreements that should reduce the cost of dismissing workers and introduce new labour contracts to convert temporary jobs to permanent ones.

As Catalonia is responsible for 20 per cent of Spain's GDP and a quarter of the country's industrial production (even though the region has only 6 per cent of the population), it has spearheaded the economic upturn under way nationwide. This has enabled the Madrid Government to boast that Spain now meets three of the five criteria for joining the European Monetary Union in 1997: currency stability, low long-term interest rates and low inflation — now 2.5 per cent.

Catalonia's economic strength is based primarily on its chemical, textile and automobile sectors, which are enhanced by clusters of small workshops and a tradition of entrepreneurial spirit.

Barcelona is being promoted as the Mediterranean's main distribution centre, a gateway to Europe for goods arriving from Asia and northern Africa. Catalans declare that it is coming to be seen as an unofficial cultural and commercial capital of the Mediterranean.

Heavyweights fight for a region's votes

The odds are shortening on the likelihood of an early showdown in Catalonia between the region's leading political gladiators, the veteran regional president and Spanish powerbroker, Jordi Pujol, and Pasqual Maragall, Barcelona's internationally renowned mayor, Michael Knipe writes.

After 14 years running the city, during which time he has won four elections and transformed Barcelona from a run-down seaport into a model of urban planning and bold architecture, Señor Maragall, a 56-year-old Socialist, is standing down in September and is expected to challenge Señor Pujol for the presidency of the Generalitat (the autonomous regional government of Catalonia).

Sr Pujol, 66, the father-figure of modern Catalan nationalism, has won six

Showdown between a mayor and president

consecutive elections as the leader of the centre-right *Convergència i Unió* (CIU) coalition and has been in office for 16 years. He, more than anyone, is responsible for its much treasured autonomy.

Sr Pujol still commands great respect among Catalans, but his party lost its majority in the Catalan assembly in 1995 and the opinion polls indicate he has less support among voters than Sr Maragall.

The regional election is not due until 1999, but the poll has prompted speculation that the wily president might bring it

forward in the hope of nipping the mayor's burgeoning popularity in the bud.

The two rivals, who run their respective administrations from graceful 14th-century palaces facing each other across the elegant Sant Jaume Square, just off the Ramblas, have contrasting personalities.

Sr Pujol is an old-style political manipulator, never averse to consorting with his political opponents behind closed doors, while Sr Maragall has a smoother, more telegenic presence. But both share a dedication to Catalonia, a commitment to nationalism rather than separatism and to Catalonia's European links.

Sr Pujol has been adept at trading his support in return for concessions for Catalonia. He is now the longest serving senior political figure in Spain and still delights in forcing the



Catalan adversaries: Pujol, left, and Maragall

Spanish television channels to report to subtitles by answering media questions in Catalan.

Sr Maragall was born to a middle-class family, but his popular appeal ranges from the city's cultural elite to the immigrant communities of the industrial suburbs. A specialist in urban planning and development, he has masterminded the transformation of the city from an industrial to a

tourist centre and is respected by urban planners worldwide. But, if he does decide to make a bid for the presidency of the Generalitat, he is by no means assured of defeating Sr Pujol.

When the opinion pollsters asked Catalans which of the two men could best be relied upon to defend Catalan's interests, only 15 per cent plumped for the mayor while 39.8 per cent stuck with Sr Pujol.

President means business

Coexistence is the key, Jordi Pujol tells Edward Owen

ASKED to compare the task of dealing with the former Government led by Felipe González, and the present one, led by José María Aznar, Jordi Pujol, president of Catalonia, says: "The situations are different. What is important is that we are working on very similar programmes."

He stressed that his relations with the two premiers are strictly businesslike. "It is not to spend the weekend or holidays together, it is to discuss important political matters for Catalonia that affect Spain, based on our programme."

"The better relations are with whom we get on best politically — and this is what we'll have to see."

The word that crops up most in conversation with Señor Pujol is *convivencia* (coexistence).

Imprisoned for three years for his nationalist activities

during Franco's regime, which suppressed all things Catalan, Señor Pujol is quick to say he never sought revenge against Madrid.

"I have tried to forget all that happened during the epoch of my persecution," he says.

"The important thing is to bring Catalonia forward, so that the country has more freedom and strength and good social cohesion, and that all goes well economically to reinforce Catalanisation."

The 1978 Spanish Constitution recognised the "historic status" of regions to form autonomous communities, and Sr Pujol says Catalonia "would have turned its back on the whole state" had the Statute of Autonomies been omitted.

"The most important matters concern financing: transfer of powers related, for example, to the police, health care, responsibilities for work

contracts and combating unemployment. We have to sit down calmly; it's a very favourable moment for Spain and for Catalonia, and it's a good time to analyse if, finally, all these changes respond or not to the structure of Spain, a plurinational state."

Sr Pujol says his bilingual education policy will take one or two generations to come to fruition, with Castilians speaking Catalan and vice versa.

"This enables coexistence between all the citizens of Catalonia, and this is positive. The language is not a motive for internal confrontation."

"Catalonia has a strong society — imaginative, creative and hard-working. For example, our government has gained a reputation for being more 'business-minded' than Spanish governments in general, and this has had economic consequences in attracting foreign capital."

Putting a sparkle into exports

Britons just can't get enough of Cava, Catalonia's answer to champagne

As Spaniards develop an increasing taste for whisky, consumption of Cava, Catalonia's version of champagne, is decreasing by 5 per cent a year in its home territory, Michael Knipe writes.

But British bubbly drinkers are consuming much more of it — about six million bottles a year, which means that Cava is gradually catching up with its more illustrious French rival.

Manuel Duran, the deputy president of Freixenet, the leading Cava producer, says: "Ours is a sparkling wine that undergoes precisely the same fermentation process as champagne. But we don't pretend to be the same as champagne. Cava has its own character, and people in Britain are beginning to realise that champagne is not the only fine-quality sparkling wine. In the UK,

our sales have now surpassed those of French and Italian sparkling wines and account for more than 30 per cent of the market."

Over the years, Catalonia has pioneered the development of high-quality Spanish wine, spurred by traditions of viticulture which stretch back to Roman times.

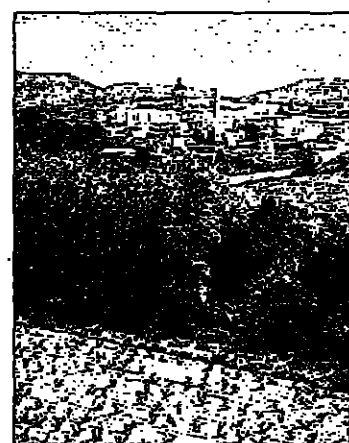
Catalan producers continue to dominate the Spanish market in fine wines. There are more than 260 winemakers in the region, producing more than 130 million bottles a year — 12 per cent of Catalonia's gross domestic product.

Two fiercely competitive companies are responsible for 70 per cent of production: Freixenet, the

dominant exporter, which sells more than 60 per cent of its produce abroad, and Cordon Negro, which vies with Freixenet for leadership in domestic sales.

Freixenet sells more *brut* (dry) Cava in the UK, but a year ago began selling a gold-label version of Cordon Negro, a medium-dry. Sr Duran says sales are booming.

The gap between champagne sales and Cava sales is narrowing annually. One of the advantages Catalan producers have over their rivals in Champagne, says Sr Duran, is that because of the more uniform weather in Catalonia, vintages achieve the same excellence each year. "Some years are



Catalonia's climate ensures good vintages year after year

better than others," he adds, "but the difference is not as great as in the north of Europe. We use only Catalan grapes — *macabeo* and *xarello* to give the wine its body and *parrellada* mainly for flavour."

Nissan invests £424m in factory

Michael Knipe looks at the incentives for foreign investors

While the car industry has been shrinking in most parts of the world, Nissan announced last month that it plans to invest 100 billion pesetas (£424 million) in a factory in Catalonia to begin production of two multi-purpose utility vehicles and a utility sports car.

"It is the latest tribute to our competitive strengths in attracting direct foreign investment," said Jordi Conejos, director general at Catalonia's Department of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

Nissan joins a long line of direct foreign investors, which have helped to shape Catalonia's buoyant economic profile and put Spain second only to France in attracting capital from abroad.

Forty-seven of the world's top 100 companies, including Ford, Shell, Hitachi, General Electric, Daimler-Benz, BP, Volkswagen and Unilever, have set up business in Catalonia. Last year they invested about £1.5 billion, an increase of 8.5 per cent on the previous year, and accounted for 24 per cent of Spain's foreign investment.

"It has been one of the main priorities of our Government to attract and facilitate direct foreign investment in Catalonia, and we have built up a network of medium and small companies across a diverse range of economic sectors to supplement it," said Señor Conejos.

The incentives and grants are limited, but the region offers good logistic support. There is a diverse

supply of component manufacturers and multi-lingual legal and accountancy firms.

"A primary reason for investment of this sort is the high productivity rates that can be achieved," said Señor Conejos. "Catalonia has a good education system, we maintain high quality technology and business schools."

Four years ago, Hewlett Packard decided to invest in a plant 12 miles outside Barcelona. The most important reason for this decision was the level of education of the labour force, he said.

"Barcelona is not a cheap city, but compared with other European cities we do not have high prices and our amenities are extremely attractive."



The 115,000-seat Nou Camp stadium has a museum housing a large art collection

NO SINGLE entity has managed to polarise Catalan sentiments as much as FC Barcelona (FCB), founded in 1899 and now one of the world's largest and most successful football clubs, Edward Owen writes. It is no coincidence that the flag of Barça, as the club is known, is almost identical to that of Catalonia: the latter's yellow and red stripes become blue and red.

During decades of repression, especially during the 36 years of Franco's regime, supporting Barcelona became one of the few ways of expressing Catalan identity, and now the huge, multi-sports club is a social phenomenon.

No one has done more to make the club a symbol of both Catalan fervour and business acumen than Josep Lluís Núñez, 65, the club's president since 1977. He is the longest-serving first division chairman in Spain and last

Winning ways of a football club

FC Barcelona is proud of its professional managers

year was voted chairman of the year by his rivals. "We have created a philosophy where really the great image of Barcelona, from the point of Catalonia, has been its form of management," says Señor Núñez. "The solidity of the club is more important than sporting success, but we always go out to win. I believe that at the moment Barcelona is doing more than anyone to sell Catalonia."

On weekdays, tour buses from all over Europe disgorge thousands of people at the club's stadium and sports complex. They have come to

visit, among other things, the club's fantastic art collection of Barça's Foundation.

Barça's Foundation has been presented with 1,400 paintings by artists such as Dali, Joan Miro, Subirachs, Antoni Pitxo and Antoni Clavi. The only criterion is that the paintings must portray something to do with the club.

Adjoining the foundation is the new VIP lounge which brings in £2.6 million a year from sponsors and has direct access to 700 of the best seats in the 120,000-seat Nou Camp stadium.

More than 30,000 people have become Barcelona club members since Sr Núñez became chairman, bringing the total to 106,000.

Unlike some British clubs, Barcelona believes it will not have to be floated on the stock exchange. "We can finance ourselves," says Sr Núñez. "Our auditors say we are at just 40 per cent of our possibilities, whereas a club like Manchester United is at 100 per cent of its possibilities."

For example, Barcelona is the only top European club not to have advertising on the

players' shirts, thus forgoing some £2.2 million in revenue. But then, annual sales of souvenir clothing bearing the club logo bring in twice that amount.

Sr Núñez says the main problem of being on the stock exchange is that a club becomes vulnerable. "We would lose our autonomy," he says. "It is unthinkable that Barcelona could be in the hands of a minority group which could dominate the future of our club."

He says Barcelona is determined to break whatever television monopoly may try to emerge during the latest battle in Spain for digital TV services. The club has signed a contract for satellite pay-per-view rights with the local *Televisió de Catalunya* (TV3) for six years at about £20 million a year.

Sr Núñez's message to struggling clubs is to prize success in management as much as success on the field.

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TODAY HE IS CATALAN



One of the most deep-rooted Catalan traditions is spreading throughout the world. In 1995 UNESCO declared April 23 rd., St. George's Day, as World Book and Copyright Day. Consequently, we dare to say that even today Shakespeare would feel Catalan. And Molière too. And Goethe, Dante or Borges would also feel Catalan. For many years, Catalonia has celebrated St. George, our patron saint, as Book and

Rose Day. And on this day we all give, to the most dear, a book and a rose, as symbol of culture and of beauty, of reason and emotion, of friendship and love. Catalonia is a country, with 6 million inhabitants, having its proper language, culture and personality within Spain. A progressive Mediterranean country, with a strong



economic development, made up of people with initiative and mentality for the future.

A country that yearly receives more than 16 million visitors and where major foreign businesses invest. A country willing to be one of the motors of Europe. This is yet

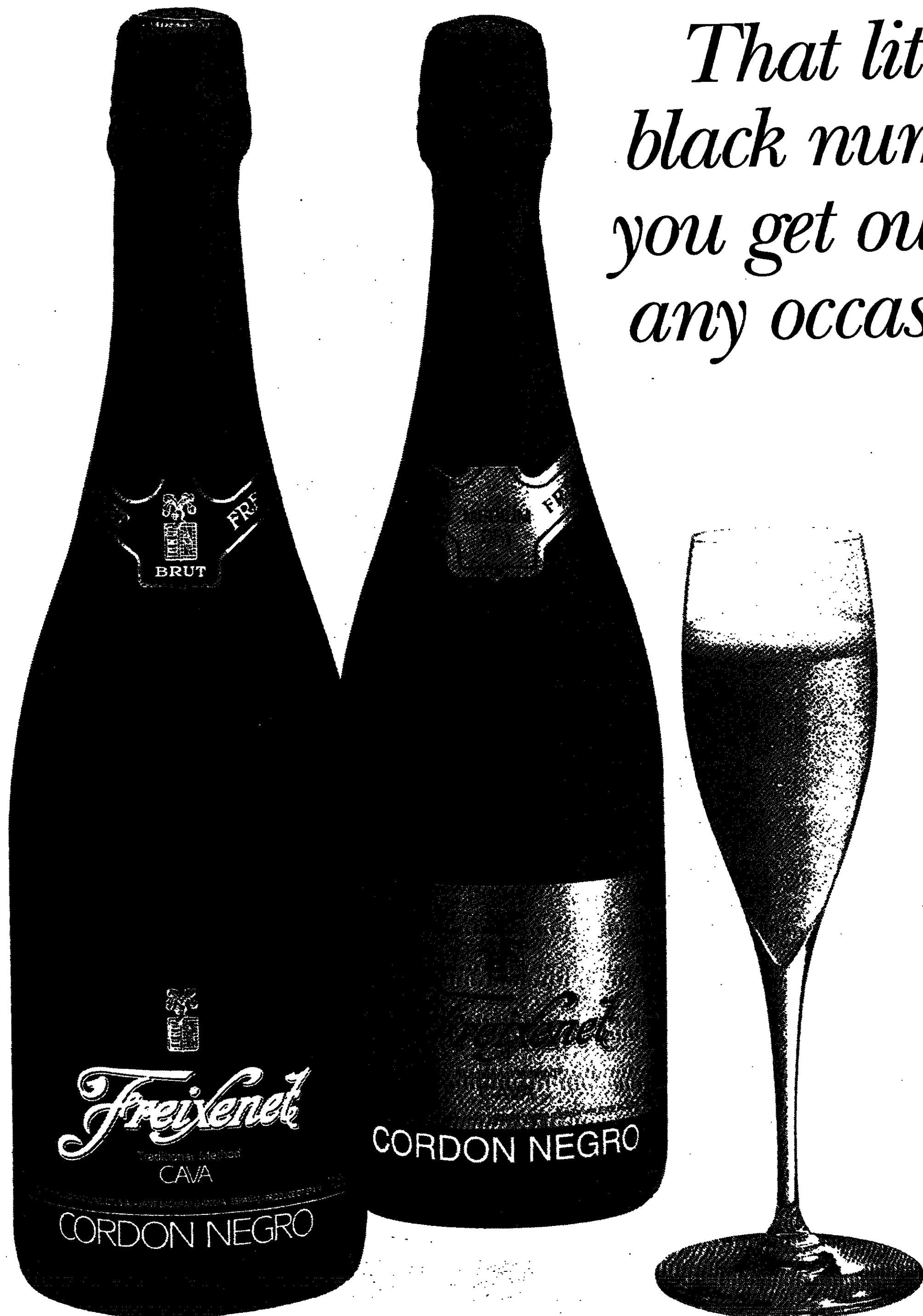
another indication of Catalonia's international projection. And we are proud, that as of now,

in addition to some of our universally known Catalans such as: Joan Miró, Antoni Gaudí, Antoni Tàpies, Salvador Dalí, Pau Casals, Montserrat Caballé or Josep Carreras, you will also know of some of our customs.



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia

Freixenet



*That little
black number
you get out for
any occasion.*

<http://www.freixenet.com>.

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Hidden treasures of run-down area

Michael Knipe reports on the progress of revitalising the old economic, social and political heart of Barcelona, one of the largest renewal projects in Europe

As a discordant mixture of flamenco and salsa music blasted across the narrow confines of Carrer de Robador, in the Raval neighbourhood of the Ciutat Vella, the historic old city of Barcelona, half a dozen seedy prostitutes stood languidly in the shade of the charming, but mostly derelict, 18th-century tenement houses.

Some of the once-elegant wrought-iron balconies were draped with a colourful mixture of washing and decorated with plant pots, but there was an overwhelming air of decay. Further down the street, policemen were in the process of making an arrest, but this elicited little general interest.

At night, visitors are advised not to venture into the Raval or Barrio Chino neighbourhood. But this was mid-afternoon and I was being given a guided tour of what is believed to be the largest urban renewal project of its kind in Europe. Eleven years after it began, the first stage of a comprehensive programme to revitalise

the Ciutat Vella is nearing completion and is widely regarded as a remarkably successful example of urban rejuvenation.

More than 400,000 square metres of land have been expropriated in the Raval district, a quarter of which has been cleared. This work has

"The aim has been to reverse the exodus of the middle-income population"

affected more than 10 per cent of the old city. More than 4,000 dwellings have been torn down and nearly 2,000 new ones have been built.

However, many of the 19th-century buildings have been saved and carefully restored and, in some cases, are now housing relocated families.

For centuries, Ciutat Vella was the economic, social and political heart of Barcelona, when the famous Ramblas was nothing more than a river bed delineating the outer limits of the 13th-century walls.

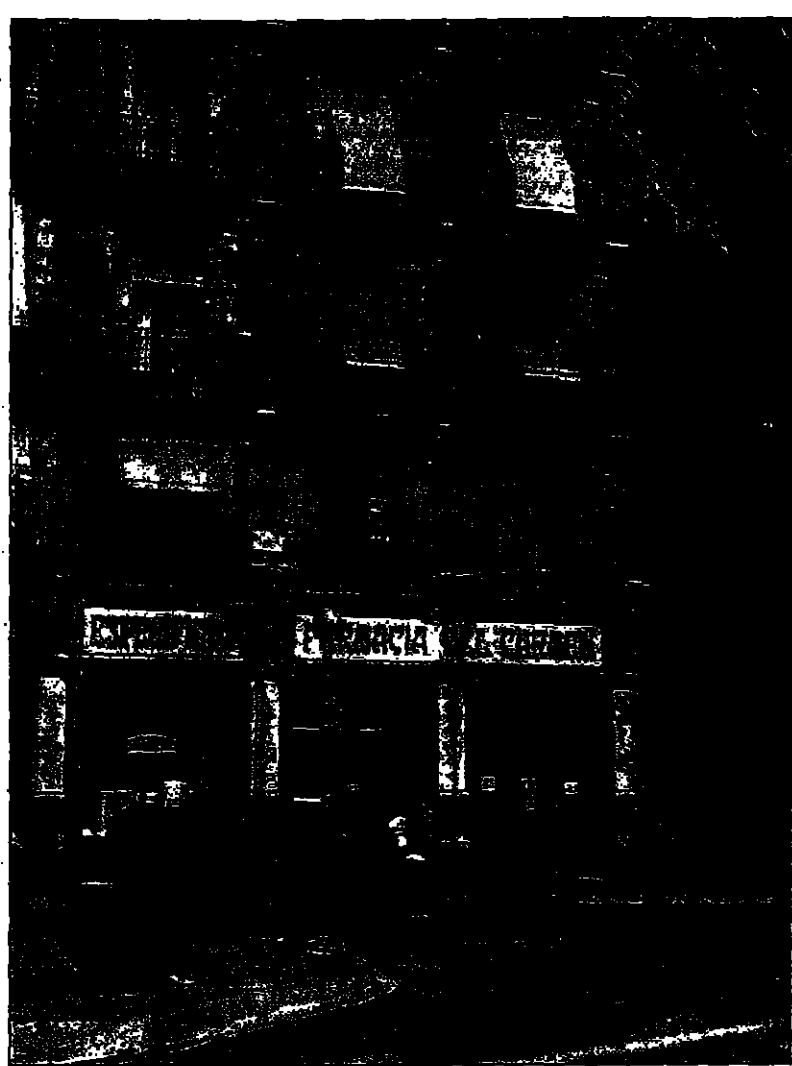
Raval, with a population of

100,000, is one of four historic neighbourhoods of the old city. Located on the right of the Ramblas as you approach the port, opposite the more tourist-friendly Gothic quarter, it was the ecclesiastical sector in the 18th century.

The Ciutat Vella went into decline following the destruction of the city walls in 1856 and the creation of the elegant boulevards of Carrer de la Diputació. Prosperous traders moved out and the neighbourhood lost its capability to renew itself.

Nearly three quarters of its 70,000 buildings were built before 1900 and suffered slow, but inexorable, degradation. In recent years, the elderly and poor of the Raval neighbourhood have been overshadowed by the drug dealers, addicts, petty thieves and squatters as well as the prostitutes.

In 1979, the first municipal administration to be elected democratically resolved to rehabilitate the worst areas and to create a community-wide system of contacts so that residents could be kept informed of the renovation pro-



Old and new: some of the better 19th-century buildings have been saved and carefully restored, but many are being demolished and rebuilt



gramme. "A primary aim was to maintain the neighbourhood's residential character," says Pasqual Maragall, the mayor, "to keep the people who like to live in the district where they were born and to encourage new people to go and live there, thus reinforcing and regenerating the charac-

teristic social texture." To achieve this, social centres have been built providing sports, playgroup and health and recreation facilities.

"Ciutat Vella treasures the historic past of Barcelona in its streets and places," says Joan Clos, the deputy mayor. "The centre of a 2,000-year-old city

is too valuable to lose or allow to deteriorate. Thus, the redevelopment and revitalisation of Ciutat Vella is a passionate target and a common effort involving all the city."

Public investment in the project has been 100 billion pesetas (about £424 million) and the private sector has

invested 130 billion. In 1994, a further £30 million was obtained from the European Union's Cohesion Fund to complete two specific projects.

"Public-sector investment was designed to stimulate the investment by the private-sector and this has proved very successful," says Martí Abella,

an architect with Promoció de Ciutat Vella.

"The aim has been to reverse the exodus of the middle-income population and we are achieving this. Public-sector companies are now in the process of moving into the area to open new shops and businesses."

Cable widens phone choice

The region is at the forefront of the telecommunications revolution

THIS summer, work will start on the building of a telecommunications cable network in Catalonia that will be in direct competition with Telefónica, Spain's privatised national telecommunications giant.

A pilot cable network connecting 20,000 homes in Barcelona — set up with the support of the Catalan government against opposition from the central Government in Madrid — is in trial operation.

"This is the only real test of cable technology under way in Spain," says Miquel

wanted to accept competition so that it could expand abroad. "The Popular Party Government inherited this idea and continued with it," Señor Puig says. "We were not excited by this approach. But we traded our support for this policy for the opportunity to begin cable operations in Catalonia."

"We want full, open competition. We don't feel, as Catalans, that we have many reasons for protecting Telefónica or supporting a duopoly. We have seen what has happened in

the United States, the UK and Norway and don't see why the duopoly concept should be pursued here.

"Our position in the parliament in Madrid is to encourage the opening up of the telecommunications sector in Spain. We wish to open the frontiers and to drop prices.

At the moment the telecommunications industry in Spain is settled around Madrid, but the consumer electronics sector is heavily located in Catalonia. If some of the newcomers locate here, it will open up more opportunities.

"We are telling potential investors that Catalonia is the right place from which to enter the Spanish telecommunications market."

The former Socialist Government's policy was to protect Telefónica, even though Telefónica itself

"We wish to open the frontiers and drop prices"

MICHAEL KNIPE

Prosperity to flow from rivers project

Mayor envisions World Forum of cultures to celebrate anniversary

Inspired by benefits reaped from the investment in the 1992 Olympics, Barcelona is now focusing its attention on staging what it calls a world forum of cultures in the year 2004, Michael Knipe writes.

This date coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Exhibition staged in Barcelona in 1929. "The objective is to bring together all the world's cultures at the same time," says Pasqual Maragall, the mayor of Barcelona.

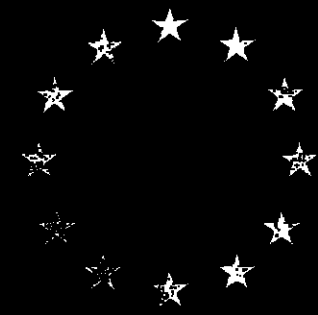
The idea has been developed by a group of the city's municipal advisers and experts, many of whom helped organise the Olympic Games. Señor Maragall is now lobbying for international support for the project, particularly from Unesco.

Joan Clos, the deputy mayor, says the forum will be used to develop Barcelona's two

river areas: the Llobregat and Besòs. "Barcelona has already reclaimed the sea and now wants to do the same with its rivers," says Sr Clos.

The aim is to recover the bed of the River Besòs and to improve the communications and infrastructure in an area which is home to more than a million people, 17 per cent of the population of Catalonia.

Neighbourhoods which have suffered severe degradation will be rejuvenated. Houses will be built, an electricity supply installed together with other services, including a highway on the left bank of the river. The port area will be developed incorporating the extended airport, an enlarged sea port and a high-speed rail link to northern Europe. By diverting the river 773 hectares of land will be recovered by the year 2000.



EUROPEAN UNION

The Environmental Regeneration of Barcelona's Ciutat Vella

has been made possible thanks to the

SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

CENTRAL RAVAL DISTRICT PROJECT
(12.12.1994 European Commission decision)
Budget: 3,855 million pesetas
Amount funded by the European Union: 85% (3,277 M.Pta.)

CASCA ANTIC (Old Quarter) PROJECT
(12.12.94 European Commission decision)
Budget: 2,055 million pesetas
Amount funded by the European Union: 80% (1,644 M. Pta.)

THROUGH THE COHESION FUNDS


SCOPE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN:

- Expropriation, Emptying and Demolishing of 192,963 m2 of road
- Urbanization of 67,541 m2 of property

PROJECT OBJECTIVES


- Revitalization of the Historical Centre
- Create a mosaic of Green Spaces and New Public Areas
- Renovation of Existing Infrastructures and Creation of New Ones
- Relocate the Affected Residents within the Area

Before




- Urban density problem that caused unhealthy living conditions: lack of fresh air, sunshine and space
- Anachronistic and insufficient infrastructures and services
- As a result: deficient quality of life for the area's residents

Today



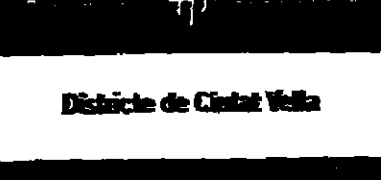
- Lots have been freed, achieving open spaces that let in sunshine and fresh air
- Two new streets have been created
- Two new plazas have been created
- Ten streets have been renovated
- Utility infrastructures have been modernized: water, gas, telephone, electricity
- By improving the quality of life, economic and social inequalities have been alleviated

Execution:




Promoció de Ciutat Vella, S.A.

Project and Management:




District de Ciutat Vella

With the collaboration of:



MINISTERIO DE ECONOMIA Y HACIENDA

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE



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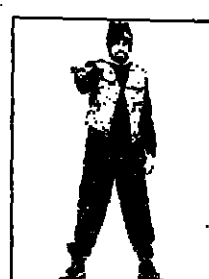
How we

A



■ OPERA

Taking Covent Garden to the people: Genista McIntosh offers a blueprint for popularity



■ VISUAL ART

Oxford's Moma traces the ambiguous relationship between the camera and reality

THE TIMES
ARTS



■ POP

The inimitable Billy Bragg takes to the road with songs, quips — and a dash of politics



■ TOMORROW

Rising sons: Seiji Ozawa prepares to dazzle Britain with Japan's premier orchestra

Can her Garden bloom?

Genista McIntosh, the new chief executive of the Royal Opera House, knows that she has an Everest to climb, as she tells Rodney Milnes

Horticulturalists will tell you that "genista" is not quite the same thing as broom, and anyway the new broom at the Royal Opera House solves the problem by being known as Jenny. She doesn't seem at all like your traditional opera house general director, which is maybe why she chose the title of chief executive. She is soft-spoken, she thinks before and while she speaks, and although she doesn't shoot from the hip, you may be sure there's a pretty pearl-handled revolver somewhere about her person for emergency use.

She has done top administrative jobs at both the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company, and earned a formidable reputation for vision, clarity of thought and decisiveness. All of those qualities are desperately needed by the soon-to-be peripatetic ROH companies.

One difference from the RNT and RSC is that there are thousands of opera-buffs convinced that they can do the job better ("the letters I get are quite interesting", she says drily) and she has already been struck by the proprietorial attitude of ROH audiences.

That's touching, but also disconcerting: people have this profound attachment to everything that happens here, and they feel deeply affronted or deeply thrilled in ways that I haven't encountered in any other audience. She is in no doubt about the challenge of the job. The first TV documentary about her predecessor, Jeremy Isaacs, was titled *The Poisoned Chalice*. "When I took the job I referred to it in those terms, and the person to whom I was speaking said: 'Well, I don't see much sign of a chalice'. Which didn't comfort me." So why take it on? "It's a bit like Everest. You try to match yourself against something slightly beyond your reach."

Her first four months have been spent ensuring that the ROH stays alive during closure. "Everything hangs on our surviving in reasonably good shape. Only then can we start making the right preparations for returning to the new theatre in 1999. The next task is to decide what it wants to be when it returns, how much should be retained, how much changed. The new building is a clear metaphor,

because you have the old theatre, refurbished but essentially still itself, and around it new buildings implying modernity, openness and flexibility. If the organisation doesn't change itself in comparable ways, an opportunity will have been lost."

She also sees abundant opportunities both for attracting new audiences in the closure period and for starting to turn around the ROH's currently disastrous "exclusive" image. "You can't be grand in the Shaftesbury or the Barbican, because all sorts of different things go on there. For heaven's sake, the Shaftesbury is currently showing *Sinderella*, and I think there's something quite salutary about the Royal

Opera going to a theatre that can also present that, or the Royal Ballet going to Labatt's Apollo following Cliff Richard. It shows that there isn't that much of a gap. It's a good opportunity, provided that the audience that goes to see, well, perhaps not *Sinderella*, but things you might expect to see at the Barbican will also come to see us. We will do all we can to persuade them. That's how you turn an image round."

New audiences may be attracted by seat prices half those charged at the ROH, but will they be retained when the companies move back and prices return to "normal"? Will they return to normal? "I hope that there will be a price structure making more seats available at prices comparing favourably with those that people expect to pay for opera elsewhere. This is not to say that we will suddenly find funds enabling us to reduce prices. We will have to be clever, making it appear, no, making it a reality that people who can afford £50 but cannot afford £150 should be able to come more often."

Those temporarily favourable prices have been achieved with co-operation from the Arts Council, and at a time when ROH and AC seem to be at each other's throats, McIntosh takes pains to stress how helpful Great Peter Street has been. "We're all in the same boat, and there's nothing to be gained from funders and funded not making common cause. It's in the interests of everybody, and of the ROH in particular, that relations with the body that provides more than £14 million of funding



Genista McIntosh: comes with a formidable reputation for vision, clarity of thought and decisiveness

each year should be cordial." McIntosh knows the Arts Council's ways and its language, and with luck the amazing scenes shown in the TV documentary *The House* will not be repeated. With sharp-eyed realism, she sees no prospect of any change in government funding policy, whatever happens next week. "The lottery has changed the climate. People believe that the problem of funding the arts has been solved. In a way it has, in that there is a lot of money around. What hasn't been solved is what to do with it. What will not happen is more funds from Treasury sources. That would not be politically acceptable to any government. So we have to hope that figures from the Treasury don't get worse,

and develop imaginative new schemes to allow the flow of money into art-forms rather than buildings."

There is no question of her hankering after the old "well-fare state whingeing" days of funding. She recognises that this is a time of change. "It's not all for the worse, but some of it is, and we have to live with it. There are so many ways in which money available to the arts can be spent that it gets harder to justify huge amounts being diverted to institutions like us. But there will always be a place for organisations that exemplify the best."

And "the best" is what her vision of the ROH entails. "If it's not the best, then we're not doing it right: it's our only justification."

POP: Essex man at his best; brassed off with disco

Labour of loved

Billy Bragg
Waterfront, Norwich

THERE may well be some clause in the Representation of the People Act which demands that every general election be accompanied by a Billy Bragg tour. Either way, the Essex singer-songwriter is now out on the road fulfilling his constitutional duty. And he manages to deliver more laughs and more political passion in 90 minutes than there has been in a month of the current campaign.

Last year's *William Blake* was his first album since the highly successful *Don't Try This at Home* in 1991. In the interim, he has contributed to a couple of film soundtracks and done the odd benefit gig, but otherwise he seems to have been seeing more of his family. Little has changed, though: he still sings about love and sex, politics and football. He still thrashes out the chords and, despite a cold, bellows out the tunes. And his audience still adores him.

They deliver word-perfect renditions of *Between the Wars* or *Accident Waiting to Happen*. On the poignant *Levi Stubbs' Tears*

they sing quietly to themselves, creating a gentle accompanying hum. All the songs, from the new single, *The Boy Done Good*, to those 14 years old, such as *The Man in the Iron Mask*, are embraced as old friends.

Bragg has a reputation for writing only about politics, but he has a knack for making the fragility and failure of love seem both funny and tragic. He cannot, of course, resist delivering the occasional political speech, about compassion being "the socialism of the heart", but there is always a song and a joke close behind.

This is a show without embellishments: no backing musicians, no light show, no lavish set. It would make a lousy photo opportunity, but it achieves a fine blend of pop and politics.

JOHN STREET

Blowing minds

Acid Brass
Queen Elizabeth Hall

ACID BRASS was conceived one evening in a pub when a music fan called Jeremy Deller drew a parallel between acid house and brass band music. He pointed out that they share a similar sense of community and exuberance, and both initially became popular in the north of England. A year later, Deller has turned acid brass into a new musical genre by hooking up with the Stockport-based Williams Fairley Band, currently rated the top brass band in Britain.

The predominantly young, trendy crowd who packed out the Queen Elizabeth Hall looked more accustomed to acid house than to a brass band. However, many were probably familiar with the evening's MC, Tony Wilson, who founded Factory Records and Manchester's Hacienda, widely regarded as the home of acid house.

Conductor Bryan Hurdley led the band, resplendent in pale blue uniforms with gold insignia, into a rousing big-band version of DJ Fast Eddie's *Can U Dance?*, fol-

lowed by 808 State's *Pacific 202*, which was pumped along by a huge brass riff and drums.

For the third number, conducting duties were taken over by Rodney Newton, who also arranged all the tracks. He began with Nitro Deluxe's *Let's Get Brutal*, with the band providing the hand-claps. Other highlights were A Guy Called Gerald's *Voodoo Ray*, where the band chanted the vocal line, and the KLF's *What Time Is Love?*

Dance music is often accused of not producing proper songs, but this evening proved that many tracks are so simple and structured that even a brass band can play them. With another date at next month's Tribal Gathering, it could be all the rage by the summer.

ANN SCANLON

VISUAL ART: Isabel Carlisle on a revealing exhibition of photography

How we've all been framed

As the arts and sciences pursue their divergent paths in this information age, an exhibition in Oxford shows photography as the enduring meeting place for the two. Prints by photographers from the middle of the 19th century to the present day, linked by a common interest in making sense of the world around them, have been grouped around different themes such as the museum; disease and madness; and origins: myths and narratives.

In the middle of the last century, the premise that the camera does not lie underpinned its use as a scientific tool. Yet the conventions observed in composing the photos of natural objects, of people of different races, of exhibits in museums, had their origins in Western art.

Photography took over the role of prints and drawings as the tool for creating a "museum without walls". It was just the tool the Victorians needed to come to grips with Darwin and his theories of evolution. Eadweard Muybridge's freeze-frame studies of naked men and women as they move through the balletic complexity of an everyday movement such as going up and down stairs are part of this need to analyse. The significance that photography gives to the every-



Art meets science: anonymous nude, taken in 1870

day by plucking it out of context and putting a frame around it reinforces the isolation of objects in museums. Photographs of Greek statues by Roger Fenton (1850-57) are at two removes from their origins. Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden's semi-pornographic shots of young naked boys

on Capri (around 1900) are lent some validity by the fact that they are striking classical poses, like Greek statues in a museum. But Thomas Struth's 1989 large colour print *National Gallery I*, London, which shows five members of the public in front of Cima Da Conegli-

ano's altarpiece, sets up more complicated resonances of a frame within a frame.

When we reach the fusing of 19 photos of criminals in an attempt to pinpoint the essence of criminality, we are back with photography as a scientific probe.

The end of the attempt to analyse human psychology with the lens of a camera is signalled by Christian Boltanski's *Archives* of 1989. The assembled photos, cut from the pages of a French weekly specialising in crime reports, give no clue as to who is aggressor, who victim: anyone can become a player in a drama of life and death.

The camera finds its way into situations that a pen or paintbrush would only rarely confront: the murder scene, the lunatic asylum, the morgue, the sexual act. Its probing gaze tackles issues in ways that are shockingly frank yet result in images that are as ambiguous as a drawing or a painting.

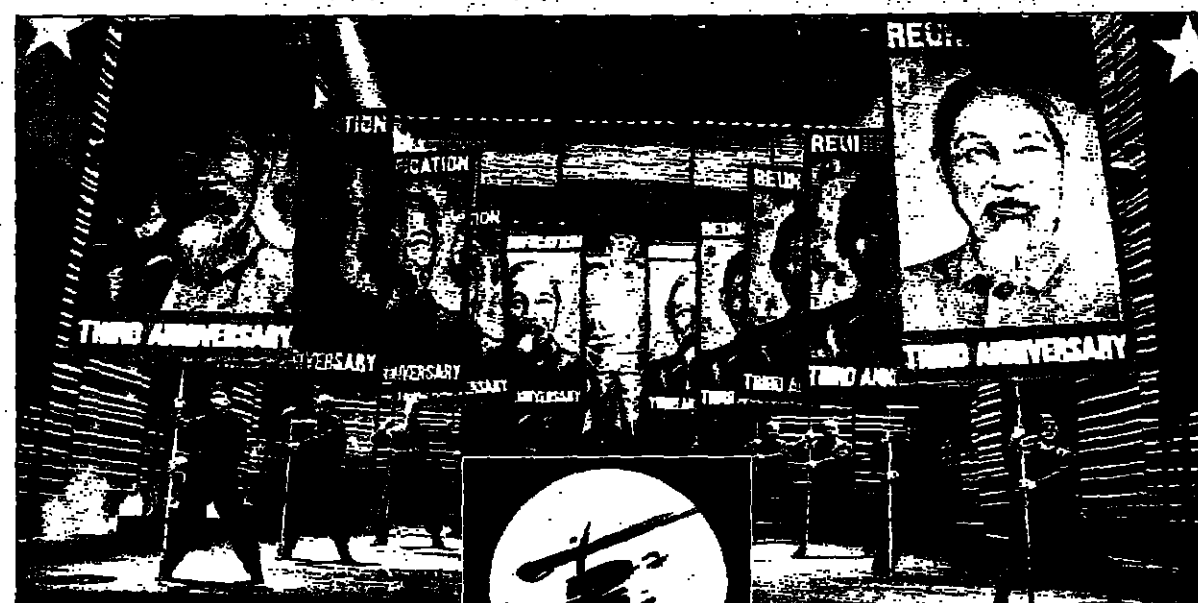
In this overview of how photography has shaped the way we look at the world, it becomes clear that the tradition of Western image-making still has a powerful hold.

● In *Visible Light: Photography and Classification in Art, Science and the Everyday*, sponsored by Oxford University Press, is at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (01865 728608), until July 6

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

An unmissable West End theatre offer



The Times Live is a new entertainment service in association with First Call, the leading ticketing agency, which offers readers priority bookings, special offers and discounted tickets on a range of live events — from pop to classical concerts, opera to ballet, theatre and sporting events.

To launch this service we have negotiated a special West End Theatre package exclusive to Times readers. When you buy two top price tickets for either *Miss Saigon*, *Cats*, *Martin Guerre* or *Oliver*, The Times will give you two top price tickets for a second show of your choice, from the four featured here, in exchange



for five Times tokens. Tickets are available throughout May and June for: *Miss Saigon* (Mon-Thurs 7.45pm & Tue matinees 3pm); *Martin Guerre* (Mon-

Thurs 7.45pm & Thurs matinees 3pm); *Cats* (Mon-Thurs 7.45pm & Tues matinees 3pm) and *Oliver* (Mon-Thurs 7.30pm & Wed matinees 2.30pm). Prices are £32.50 each plus a £2.50 booking fee per ticket.

To apply, collect five differently numbered tokens from The Times this week and send them, with the application form which will appear on Friday and your payment to: The Times Live, West End Theatre Offer, P O Box 92, London, WC2H 9SU. Applications must arrive no later than Friday, May 2. Offer subject to availability.

● See The Times 16-page guide to this summer's entertainment free with Monday's paper for more special offers and discounted tickets. If you did not receive your copy please call 0171-481 3355.



THEATRE 1

Brecht is well served by an in-the-round staging of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Olivier



THEATRE 2

Lavatorial humour but little terror remains in the Gate's version of *King Ubu*

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE 3

Find Me proves to be an unsatisfactory attempt to delve into the minds of the unstable



RISING STAR

Holly Slater is that rare thing: a woman tenor saxophonist, and one who also gets rave notices

THEATRE: Brecht on the South Bank, Père Ubu loses his barbs, Shakespeare at the gallop and confusion in the asylum

Morality played for our times

The large circle which is now the Olivier stage is not chalk, but shiny black something or other. With purple seats rising round it and grey plastic and silver teel hovering above it, the amphitheatre looks like a giant flying saucer. I felt I was about to be transported by aliens — for, after all, little is more alien to Olivier tradition than the rough-theatre style associated with Simon McBurney's Theatre de Complicite, and nothing more alien to 1990s Britain than Brecht's communist ideology.

Well I was transported, but in a wholly benign way. With McBurney himself in control, simplicity and Complicite turn out to suit Brecht's story very well, and even those who object to the play's drab prologue and didactic thrust must admit that Brecht was a born storyteller. Derived from a 13th-century Chinese play and the biblical judgment of Solomon, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* has the magic of folk legend, yet as up-to-date as the Baby M case: our era's other quarrels about the nature of parenthood.

If it's potentate's wife who abandons her baby in her haste to keep her dress out of rebel hands is a caricature, well, so is the evil queen in my fairy-tale. What matters is that the kitchen maid who rescues the child from death and faces danger and adversity in protecting him should not be too much a Cinderella or Snow White parody. But with Juliet Stevenson in the role, that is not a problem. Although her Grusha gets less princess-looking as the evening bangs along, she never loses an undidged, pinched look and, although her maternal rage is undeniably moving, there is nothing sentimental about her. Her heroism is always grittily unheroic.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle
Olivier

Likewise with McBurney, who plays Azdak, the judge who adjudicates between her and her one-time employer. With his loopy, goofy looks and scarecrow jacket, he is in no danger of dwindling from a sly, subversive maverick into a lovable clown. And, as director, he jogs you into believing that a pillow is an infant, a bicycle wheel a coach and poles everything from swords to waves to the struts of the perilous bridge over which Grusha edges.

Your imagination will happily follow McBurney's hints, but your intellect may carp at his opening. Should he have cut the prologue, in which villagers argue about whether a valley should be reclaimed by goat-breeders or used to irrigate a fruit-farming collective? Brecht felt it showed the contemporary relevance of a play that suggested that rights should be earned rather than inherited, and that property belongs to those who use it best.

But directors have tended to ditch the prologue, in my view rightly. Doesn't it particularise and limit the resonance of the long parable that follows? Or, if we must be particular, aren't the play's obvious implications more to the point in our post-socialist world? Foster, adoptive or step-parents sometimes have a better claim to children than "biological parents". Nurture sometimes outranks nature. That is a provocative enough thought for today.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Balancing act: Juliet Stevenson, as Grusha, crosses the bridge — "Her heroism is always grittily unheroic"

Toilet talk at the dinner table

King Ubu
Gate

A BRIGHT lad will find many ways to be revenged on a bully. He can take the strange, masochistic route of Chaim Reeven Weinrop, who was tormented by an Irish sergeant-major called Flanagan and swore that he would adopt the man's name when he became a comic, which he did with his partner, Chesney Allen. Less perverse is the young Alfred Jarry's revenge on his physics teacher, Hébert, whom he turned into Père Ubu, brutal hero of numerous tales and plays.

King Ubu is a very free adaptation by Kenneth McLeish of the *Ubu Roi* that rocked them in Paris in 1896. Ubu kills the King of Poland and usurps the throne: he slaughters the nobles to grab their wealth, he grinds the faces of the poor. In Jarry's original he personified the greedy, ignorant, ferocious common man turned Führer. After the first performance, Yeats wrote in his journal, "After us the Savage God".

Nobody will leave the Gate with any such thoughts. The schoolboy humour is still present: Ubu's sceptre is a toilet brush, his throne and horse grubby toilet seats, and John Wright's direction inventively uses sink-plungers to represent swords, guns, trumps and a wooden leg. But the production is fatally short of terror — even of serious alarm — and, without a sense of atrocity, of nations laid waste and tortures casually enjoyed, self-indulgence rewarded and virtue ruined, the play falls back upon its nonsense language and roller-coaster plot. But these are no longer the mind-rocking novelties of 100 years ago.

What certainly is memorable is the design. The long, narrow space regularly tests the invention of a production team, and David Roger fills the space with an enormous



Ubus: Stephen Finegold (left) and Joanna Holden

play, its two dimensions (on top and underneath) eventually become a confinement. Stephen Finegold's Ma Ubu, dispensing Ugly Sister courtesy when not rolling up the character's terrible breasts, conveys something of the play's huggery, and Joanna Holden's pot-bellied Pa manages to be venomously alarming when lavatorial. But for a play that can be presented as a savage political fable, the grimmer qualities seem not to have been sought.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Rapid eye movement made flesh

"KEEP moving! Keep moving!" must have been the instruction from Niall Henry when directing Blue Raincoat's new version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His actors dutifully obey, and for two hours they spin, slide, crawl, climb and dance their way around the carefully empty performance space at the Factory.

Blue Raincoat produce a strain of theatre that seems to work, a large extent, under the shadow of Peter Brook. His influence extends not just through their heavily choreo-

graphed performance style, the bare performance space, or the odd loopy grin, but also to the choice of material. Shakespeare's comedy must offer every small, independent company a pleasant image of itself projected through time. Give or take a few hundred years and a couple of Arts Council grants, Blue Raincoat might have been the play's band of strolling performers, living from show to show, offering their work too generously to an audience that might easily prove fickle and uninterested.

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Sligo

The current production follows this cue by putting the emphasis on the roughness of its magic, leaving props and scenery at a minimum (although the glorious junk shop of costumes by Mudita Procter adds sparkle) and forcing the actors to burn every available calorie summoning up Shakespeare's dreams. From the opening scene the stage is full of action, as though Henry intended to balance the bow of words with an equally intricate pattern of movements.

While all members of the cast are kept busy — they never leave the stage and most play several roles — there are some strikingly charismatic performances.

Fiona McKeown's Puck is a bright thread to sew the play's interwoven mini-plots together. Her movements constantly evoke the metaphor of the needle and thread as she winds herself around props and other actors with equal liveness. Brendan Ellis is inspiringly regal, with just a suspicion of ironic detachment as Theseus, and with the aid of a red nose equally convincing as a stoutly neurotic Quince.

Henry's production offers a convincing account of Shakespeare's comedy, finding contemporary resonance without recourse to any stifling "updating", and giving the play a bright glow of energy. For the company to maintain this level of physical exertion for the length of its forthcoming tour, however, will require immense resources of old-fashioned craft.

LUKE CLANCY

Truth unadorned

Find Me
Pentameters, NW3

AFTER causing £6 worth of damage to a hospital chair, a 19-year-old mental patient, Verity Taylor, was committed to Broadmoor on February 23, 1976 for an indefinite period. The sad facts behind this incident form the bones of American playwright Olwen Wymark's documentary play, which explores the tricky business of insanity. In this fitful, heavily workshoped production no fewer than five young adult actresses play Verity, from the age of four to the day she was incarcerated.

A small lifetime of hyperactivity, epilepsy and bullying is whisked by us like so much freight. The company of eight (including three males), dressed in brown shirts, skirts, belts and chinos, frogmarches us through her years at school, the screaming fits, the embarrassing visit to a French restaurant, and the social torture she inflicts on her desperate parents.

The fact that she is both misunderstood (preoccupied) and an impossible child (noisy) is hammered home with a pitiless lack of humour and militaristic zeal by the well-drilled cast of Indelible Theatre Limited.

The harsh lighting and close quarters of this most spartan of fringe productions puts

one's teeth on edge. By the time we get to the Taylors' fireworks party with Verity, aged 11, bouncing off the walls with shrill over-excitement, we are deep in migraine territory. Like Verity what I really needed was tablets: in her case treatment for probable manic depression.

The parents, sympathetically portrayed by Wymark, appear to be doing the decent thing by having her committed to a mental asylum. There is one magical chorus of female whispers, where Verity's thoughts are handed, like a baton, around the five female actresses.

But otherwise Clive Perrott's production is an assault course. By continually shuffling the parts of mother, father and brothers around the rest of the cast he throws away the chance of any contrasting consistency. Ultimately, the only thing that does sustain our interest is the fact that it is based on a true story. Sad though that story is, it is simply not enough.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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CHANGING TIMES

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
HOLLY SLATER

Age 24.
Profession: Saxophonist.
The rare creature, a female tenor player? Yes, and a god one: last year she won the "Louis" award at the 11th annual Royal Sun Alliance Connections Young Jazz Musician of the Year.

Why is she going to take on a Big Apple, then? She already has. She's just played a five-night stint at the Vish Blue Note club in Greenwich Village.

Owery own John Coltrane in the making? That's one influence, but she's more attracted to players of the older school. She particularly likes the swagger and balladry of Dexter Gordon.

Was she singing *Lullaby of Birdland* in the cradle? Not quite. She says she only became truly serious about jazz "about three years ago". What attracted her most of all was the freedom: "It's probably the most creative art form of the all, because you can do just about anything."

Academic credentials: A jazz and popular music degree at Middlesex University. A friend encouraged her to apply for a sabbatical in the US, and she spent the whole of her second year at William Patterson College in New Jersey, studying under the veteran jazzman Rufus Reid.

Was that fun? "I'd spend the day at college, and drive into New York with friends around 11pm to hear music in the clubs. We'd normally get back at 5am; I'd go to a diner for breakfast, then go straight off to classes."

Sounds tiring. "There's so much going on over there that I've nearly stayed." After finishing her degree, she went into teaching, but threw herself into a full-time music career after winning her regional heat of the Louis awards.

Back to reality: True, jazz is no way to become an overnight celebrity. But Slater has already worked with the red-hot American singer Dennis Rowland this year, and she'll be appearing at Ronnie Scott's club next month. A record is on the way too, taped at her last visit to the Frith Street venue.

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£21,000 package

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For Executive Secretarial positions in the City, Tel: 0171 638 1666

For over 1,000 jobs, visit: <http://www.reed.co.uk>

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£20,000 (AAE)

This charitable organisation seeks a creative secretary to take on this diverse role. The ideal candidate will have 5 years previous secretarial experience, good computer skills including Word4Windows, Powerpoint, Excel and Access and be confident and self motivated. This exciting and challenging position offers excellent career prospects and cross training.

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TEMP EXPLOSION - up to £10.50 PER HOUR REGULAR work INTERESTING assignments. TOP rates? If these are important we can help. Our clients - Banking to Fashion, Art to PR, Media to Advertising - Demand the Best. Reply NOW for immediate interview if you have 50+ typ. are reliable, professional, well presented (Huge demand for shorthand, W4W, Excel, Powerpoint).

KNIGHTSBRIDGE SECRETARIES E

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WA

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Excellent skills are essential including a good knowledge of Powerpoint. Salaries are £18-19,000. Coca-Cola offer a fabulous benefits package.

0 1 7 1 2 2 5 1 8 8 8

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"ONLY 6 MONTHS EXPERIENCE"

This is a superb opportunity for a college/graduate leaver with a minimum of six months experience to join this well known and highly successful design company. Working closely with a young team you will be able to get truly involved. You will arrange travel, meetings, co-ordinate diaries as well as extensive liaison with clients. You must be outgoing and friendly, enjoy thinking on your feet and being busy. Good secretarial skills are essential, minimum of 50wpm together with a sound knowledge of W4W.

0 1 7 1 2 2 5 1 8 8 8

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"ADMIN ASSISTANT"

Prestigious international Executive Search company are looking for a bright, switched on assistant to support a friendly and supportive team. Based in stunning offices in Mayfair, you will be responsible for administrative systems within the department, setting up meetings and managing the information centre as well as providing back up secretarial support. An excellent position with promotion prospects for someone who has 6 months to 1 year's secretarial experience.

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Required for an exciting role within a small but expanding financial advisory company, based West End.

*Very good secretarial skills, including fast shorthand
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*Salary negotiable for right candidate
*Please fax CV + application letter to 0171 495 4141
*No agencies

PA TO DIRECTOR & TEAM

Working for a large multinational organisation. An exciting opportunity to use your French, Powerpoint and excellent secretarial and organisational skills. Salary £20,000 and outstanding benefits package.

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OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

£13,000 + p.a.

For Market Research firm in W6. Reporting to the sales manager, you will be well organised, motivated and computer literate.

Please send your application to: HR (RQ) Ltd, 5 Broadland Road, London W6 0EA.

ACTIVITY COVER HUNTER. Experienced PA needed from June for 7 months to organise and book after Christmas. Chief Executive of a private client investment management company. Must be able to anticipate CEO's needs W4W and media skills required.

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Busy, friendly architect's studio urgently requires 2 experienced project secretaries with good office/PA skills. One year's experience in a similar role is essential. Salary will reflect experience. Reply in writing with detailed CV to: 281-275, Market Lane, London WC2N 6AA.

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"SEVEN DWARFS..."

Seek a "Seven Dwarf" to organise their special Mayfair offices. Friendly, young, enthusiastic couple with high status & professional contact make this an ideal position for an independent & flexible PA. All aspects, occasional typing (50wpm min) + good W4W. French useful. Age 25-32yrs. £220,000.

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PR Consultant with varied clients (high tech to leisure), requires experienced Secretary/PA with W4W/Excel/Word, book-keeping and PR Agency skills. Autonomy and open mind, initiative and good presentation essential. Salary £15,000. For or send CV to: W4W Workroom Limited, 23/24 Margaret Street, London W1B 7LS. Tel 0171 636 2522 Fax 0171 550 2292

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* £16-21K + o/t + full bend

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Lots to learn in this challenging, varied role if you have the intelligence & motivation to expand on your commercial skills. Working in a small but well established Financial Trading company with world wide contracts, you will provide a key role in a fun, compact team. Responsibilities include organising flights, diary management, typing, and dealing with important clients. Languages an advantage.

SECRETARY £16,000 BOND STREET

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SECRETARY £14,000-£15,000 W1

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To find out more call BEVERLEY or CHRYS on 0171 629 8777.

Office Angels Recruitment Consultants

INFORMATION IS POWER

THE TIMES GORDON YATES

ADMIN, SECRETARIAL AND SUPPORT STAFF SALARY SURVEY 1997

Do you have responsibility for support staff recruitment or employment?

If so, you need to equip yourself with the Gordon Yates/Times salary survey - the UK's largest annual study of support staff pay, benefits and employment conditions.

Drawn from confidential responses from 516 companies employing over 224,000 staff throughout the UK, this year's survey confirms:

• pay rates for secretaries and PAs across 16 different business sectors, from junior

to senior levels, from Central London through Outer London to the rest of the UK

• salary averages for 47 other categories of support staff

• data about bonuses, benefits, hours, reviews, training and much more besides

Be informed, be powerful! Get your complimentary copy today.

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Office Power
to \$8.00ph

- Do you have a good data inputting speed (min 6,000kph)?
- Can you set up databases from scratch?
- Can you set up experience on a variety of switchboards?
- Do you have experience in an accounts department ploughing through mounds of paperwork?
- Comfortable in an accounts research or sales experience?
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- Are you a "Jack/Jill of all trades" - happy to help with the filing, photocopying, postroom or whatever is thrown your direction?

Then we would love to hear from you as we specialise in non-secretarial positions such as clerical, data inputting, database work and a variety of admin roles. If you have the above skills and are flexible and well presented then we can offer you a variety of short and long term bookings, competitive rates (up to \$8.00 per hour) and our AIR MILES incentive.

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City 0171 390 7000

Happy Talky
up to \$15,000
West London

Young, progressive and exciting organisation require 2 energetic administrator/co-ordinators to join their small busy team. A clear and professional telephone manner is essential to liaise with clients and associates, whilst your excellent IT and administration skills will also be put to good use. If you are bright and on the ball, with a positive attitude and would like to be considered for one of these interesting roles, please call

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West End
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Money, Money, Money
Temps to \$10ph

Come and join our fantastic temp team and experience all the glamour and excitement the City has to offer. Choose the buzz of the trading floor or the intrigue of corporate finance and show them what a good secretary is made of. Excellent windows packages, 55 wpm and the right attitude is all you need to get the best deal including top rates, overtime and AIR MILES awards. Call us now for an immediate interview and let us take you further than you ever thought possible.

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"Crone Corkill also provide competitive temp rates which can be a major factor when seeking out agencies but to others in their temp AIR MILES as well as an incentive to temp with Crone Corkill. If you are one of those people who are considering temping then, I would thoroughly recommend starting at Crone Corkill."

Alice Brown
Temporary & Permanent Candidate

Consultants
dedicated to
your success**Home from Home**
\$18,000
West London

Looking for a nice boss and straight hours? This highly regarded media group are seeking a loyal and committed secretary. Working in this small, friendly environment tip top hands on approach are essential. If you have a positive outlook, audio and 55 wpm typing, call

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West End
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A candidate charter to reflect commitment to our candidates.

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\$14,000 + Bonus

Join this prestigious City stockbrokers and get your foot on the first rung of the Personnel career ladder. By setting up interviews, sending out offer letters and liaising at all levels, your role will be key to this dept. 1 years' experience, 50 wpm, Word 6. Please call

Kia Felton-Smith - City
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"My first contact with Crone Corkill was as an applicant looking for temporary work. I registered with several agencies at the same time but found that Crone Corkill was by far the most professional and extremely helpful and determined to assist me in my search for work. I was placed in a banking agency and my company shortly after that I was promoted to a permanent employee. My dealings with Crone Corkill are now as a Client and I am extremely impressed with their service. I would recommend Crone Corkill to the overall quality of their service and approach in every circumstance."

Colin Rowlinson
CRONE CORKILL

An extensive range of clients in a wide variety of industries.

Free career counselling

Sports Media German
\$18,000

Do you want to work in Sports media sales in light, open-plan offices with a young, trendy team? Do you have Word for Windows, Excel & PowerPoint, 40wpm typing & 100 shorthand? Are you outgoing, fun and positive with good skills & knowledge of German? Would you prefer to work locally (SW London, close to the Underground) rather than hiking into the West End or City every day? Then call Benedicte Lecuyer now to arrange an immediate interview!

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Our specialist Multilingual Division recruits in all the major languages.

Up! Up! ...and away!
Language temps!
to \$10ph

The gas fires are roaring, the hot air is rising! We've still got room for professional secretaries with a second European language, 50 wpm typing and a good range of systems to hop aboard our hot air balloon! Get the best view of the City with Crone Corkill...Our clients stretch as far as the eye can see. Call Mikaela or Justine on 0171 390 7000, we're waiting!

Multilingual

Spencer Stuart**Economic Research**
\$30,000 pkg

Opportunity for an assistant to join small team of economists within this successful American investment bank. Duties will include presentation of economic commentary, independent projects and use of the Internet, Bloomberg and Reuters for analysis, as well as admin tasks. Financial experience is essential as is Pagemaker knowledge.

Please call Claire Ashley -
City 0171 390 7000.

PILLAR

"We have used Crone Corkill exclusively for many years as we value particularly the continuity and experience of your consultants and their knowledge of our requirements. You have never failed to find us excellent permanent candidates and successful temporary staff even at short notice."

Chris Smith
Pillar Property

Don't be a floating voter, now!

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Word/Excel
PowerPoint
55+ wpm Typing
to \$10ph

Sales Assistant
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Dynamic and successful team of Equity Traders require a bright and streetwise assistant. You will be close to the action and must be able to juggle numerous priorities. Essential requirements are a numerate brain and a flexible approach with skills of 50 wpm/WP. Please call

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Free cross-training on a comprehensive range of WPs, graphics & spreadsheets.

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Thank you all for your support!

Bright

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TEAM SECRETARY CITY
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Bright lights, big opportunity

Susan MacDonald on the City's demand for tough young go-getters

High-flying secretary wanted to work with City whizz-kids. £20,000 plus mortgage subsidy, paid O/T, subsidised restaurant, gym, NC pension, health, life, BUPA, subsidised loans and bonus. Or "Second Secretary City: £14,000 + bens. Fantastic opportunity for a young secretary to kick-start career in the City."

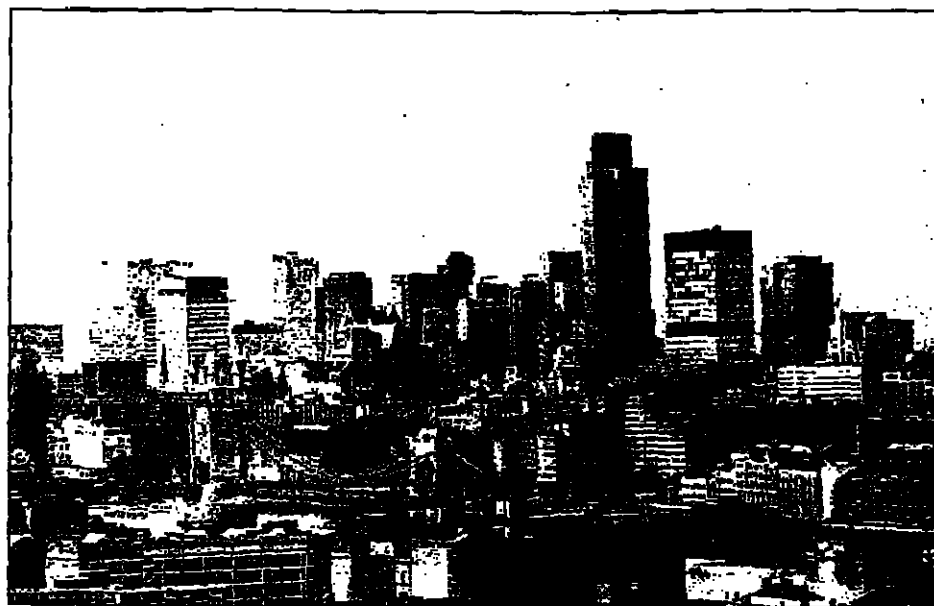
Advertisements such as these appear often in *The Times* and other broadsheet newspapers. Do they make you drool with longing to work in the Square Mile, or do you feel there must be drawbacks? Large recruitment agencies agree that the City is buoyant, that financial institutions are desperate to find good secretaries. PAs and support staff and that the salaries, bonuses and benefits offered are high enough to change your lifestyle. But they also agree that banks are looking for outgoing, bright people, preferably in their twenties, who will not suffer greatly because of the amount of time and energy they will be expected to dedicate to their job.

For those seeking top earnings who do not mind working long hours at high speed,

banking is the place to be. Working for City property and insurance companies does not put secretaries on the same financial level. They can be fun to work for but the salaries are not so enticing, the benefits not so good and there could be a heavy amount of audio typing, according to Debbie Burke of Roc Recruitment.

Ms Burke says that demand for outstrips supply because City banks like secretaries who already have banking experience. "We get fabulous secretaries in here, with excellent skills and qualifications, who want to get in to the City. One of the best ways to do this, if they have no banking experience, is to work in the corporate finance area. This entails working all hours, sometimes for several years, and being between 22 and 28 years old. But it is a way in and, once in, a way up."

"Some City banks ask for A levels or degrees, but mainly it is experience they are looking for. Speeds and good shorthand are still important and having top-level computer skills is paramount. In fact City secretaries need it all — skills, presentation, education and a smart appearance. "We know the right people as soon



As business booms in the Square Mile, the rewards for top secretaries keep growing

as we see them. We call them 'walkers' because they can walk in the door and walk out again with a job."

Tara Ricks of Joslin Rowe recruitment consultants agrees that demand for secretaries is exceeding supply in the City because businesses are expanding. Joslin Rowe's figures show an increase in demand of 20 per cent in the first quarter of this year. "City banking institutions cover Europe, America and Asia, so there is a lot of overtime

involved, but it is a meritocratic environment and the opportunities are great," she says. The role of the secretary has changed enormously. "Secretaries and PAs are no longer seen as second-class citizens — there are more graduate secretaries now," Ms Ricks says. "Gone are the days of sitting at a desk typing; these City secretarial and support staff jobs entail initiative, decision making and responsibility for project work."

Bea Francis of DTA Bil-

gual, who specialise in placing secretaries with languages in City jobs, says: "Secretaries must be dynamic and bubbly or they won't stand a chance. Many banks need foreign languages at bilingual or trilingual standard. Secretaries will not get paid extra for their languages, but they will get jobs because of them."

"Ninety-nine per cent of our placements are graduates, many with a degree in modern languages. City jobs are great for people who need to be

challenged constantly and would be bored stiff otherwise."

About 95 per cent of City secretaries are female, but recruitment agencies say the few men they have on their books are very good at their jobs and often work their way upwards.

Claire Ashley of Crone Corkill, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this week, is more optimistic about the chances of secretaries without financial backgrounds getting City jobs. She says that secretarial roles have changed dramatically in the four years she has been working in the company's City office, and that opportunities for advancement — especially for graduates — are far greater.

Bright young things are still much in demand, she says, "but now banks are taking on secretaries over 30, when the extra years mean more banking experience and greater computer literacy."

"Salaries and benefits are as good as ever — average benefits can amount to between £3,000 and £4,000 a year, not including bonuses. Many secretaries who are thinking of moving jobs are having their salaries upped in a bid to keep them. This means young secretaries can get into the City through temping, but older ones still need banking experience."



Candidates Eileen Gordon, left, and Clare Whelan

Politics beckons MPs' employees

LIKE many secretaries before them, Eileen Gordon and Clare Whelan have looked at what their boss does and thought "I can do that." And come May 2, the news they would both like to hear is that they will soon be joining their erstwhile employers in Parliament. Eileen Fursland writes.

Eileen Gordon, 50, has spent the past seven years working for Tony Banks, who was the Labour MP for Newham, east London. She is standing for Labour in Romford, Essex.

Clare Whelan, 41, is the Conservative candidate for West Lewisham in south London, and has worked for Edwina Currie since

1989, just after she resigned as a minister from Mrs Thatcher's Government.

They each have a daughter and a son. Whelan's are 21 and 14, Gordon's 18 and 21. Both feel strongly that there should be more women in Parliament.

Ms Gordon was a teacher until she became Tony Banks's secretary. "Politics has always been part of my life, so this is an ideal job for me."

Ms Whelan, too, has been a political animal all along. "I am a local councillor, so I already had some idea of how politics worked," she says.

Both women say that their experience helped them to get selected.

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PUBLISHING Marketing Mad? c14,500

If you're a secretary who's a team player with a keen interest in book publishing then you're really going to enjoy being part of this busy marketing team. If you'd like to work in fast selling titles and are efficient, enthusiastic and lively, then this is the job for you! Good typing needed (50wpm)/Powerpoint a plus.

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The company: Leading name in environmental research, with offices around the world.
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The essentials: Experience within a project-based role, confident Word/Excel, good telephone skills.
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The company: Rapidly expanding, dynamic, fast-paced specialist in financial sector recruitment.
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The company: London HQ of prestigious international business specialising in construction and civil engineering.
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The company: A prestigious investment bank based in London's West End, with fantastic offices, benefits & opportunities.
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The company: Highly successful investment company specialising in spotting winners amongst small, growing companies.
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secretarial recruitment consultants

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A short-hand secretary with 3-5 years' solid experience in Corporate Finance or Investment banking is required to work in a prestigious City Bank. Main administrative and secretarial duties will include maintaining stationary, arranging travel and assisting in the production of high quality marketing and transaction related documents using presentation software. As there will be much client liaison, you will need to be confident and enjoy the challenge of a busy and proactive role. Systems knowledge of MS Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint required. Spreadsheet experience would be an advantage.

Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House,
11 Bloomfield Street, London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 582 9417

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secretarial recruitment consultants

PART-TIME SECRETARY c£18,000 + BENS CITY

A very busy equity trading team in a major European Securities firm has an urgent requirement for a flexible and efficient secretary/administrator who can come in and help with their heavy workload. The successful applicant will be able to work from 8.30am - 5.30pm, 5 days a week for approximately 4 hours a day. Confidentiality is essential. The role is very useful, good systems knowledge and excellent communication skills are essential. In this fast moving role your duties will include booking travel, opening and checking client accounts and organising corporate events. There will be an opportunity to develop this newly created position and take on additional responsibilities.

Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House,
11 Bloomfield Street, London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 582 9417

JOSLIN ROWE

secretarial recruitment consultants

SHORTHAND PA c£20,000 + BENS WEMBLEY

A prestigious firm of Insurance Brokers (due to relocate to the West End in 6 months) has an excellent opportunity for an experienced and enthusiastic PA living in the Wembley area. You will be working one-to-one with a very personable and generous Chairman and so you must be of a friendly and confident disposition. The role is challenging and demanding so they are looking for someone flexible and able to think on their feet. A very competent level of MS Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint is required along with fast and accurate copy typing and 100 wpm shorthand. Insurance experience is not essential.

Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House,
11 Bloomfield Street, London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 582 9417

A LUCKY BREAK

£16,000 + HUGE PKG

It's what you've been waiting for! The chance to work in an environment that recognises your secretarial contribution, provides ongoing training and development and rewards you with an outstanding benefits package that includes PRP, paid overtime, gym, restaurant and health care.

You will need:

- 18 mths + sec experience
- English & Maths GCSE D+
- 55wpm audio min
- the ability to effectively support a busy team

Interested? Then call us now!

Tel: 0171 287 3664 Fax: 0171 287 3564

NEXT EMPLOYMENT

Numerate PA

c£20,000 + bonus

London arm of major US Asset Management firm needs a vivacious, organised PA for the newly arrived MD. You will handle worldwide liaison, travel arrangements and assist with some accounting issues. A Levels, advanced Excel essential. Age 25-30. Call Sarah on 0171 390 7000.

Crone Corkill

Aldrich & Company

Office Co-ordinator to £13,000 + B Bens

Superb role for confident college leaver or 2nd jobber. Based in Exec Office of major Bank with lots of supporting a Manager + organising meetings, client liaison at all levels. Good organisation and sec skills. Call Emma Silverman

CITY RECRUITMENT Tel: 0171 588 8999 Fax: 0171 588 8998

MS OFFICE - TEMP SECRETARIES LONG/SHORT TERM

Our prestigious clients based in City and West End seek experienced if you have 50wpm (but useful), Word, Powerpoint and Excel skills you are looking for a temp team & friendly and efficient as you are Call Rachel Macgregor-Holmes or Rachel Higgins at Tate

Appointments on 0171 408 0424

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FORMULA ONE c£24,000 SW 7

Businessman/Formula One driver needs a fast-track PA who'll cope with everything from complex travel arrangements, to property investment, to sponsorship, looking closely with a Business Manager, you're a key team member ensuring projects run on oiled wheels. Ultra-fine attention to detail is fundamental. Essential: self-confidence, computer literacy & infinite initiative. Age 25+

PLEASE CALL 0171 373 7779

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Employment Services

THE BASIC NAME FOR EXCEPTIONAL RECRUITMENT

JUNIOR SECS £13-15K BORED! FRUSTRATED!

Boost your career prospects working for a top City money broker where your efforts will be rewarded and your potential developed.

In return they are looking for a polished, professional individual with a mature but friendly personality and immaculate presentation.

Ideally you will have 50wpm typing, W4W, Excel and be aged early to mid 20's.

If you are looking for a rewarding role where you can enjoy excellent benefits including performance related pay and many more. Call ASAP for further information on this and many other permanent vacancies.

Call Mary Pearce on 0171 229 7575 Recruit Ag.

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Executive Assistant LONDON W1

£22,000+Bens

Join this prestigious Human Resources company as assistant to the M.D. Organise his hectic working life, co-ordinate hospitality and run the office. 2 1/2 years sec exp. coupled with a dynamic personality will guarantee your success. W4W. 45 wpm.

CONTACT SIÂN COUCHMAN

TEL 0171-405 2340

FAX 0171-631 2999

THE RECRUITMENT BUSINESS

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Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

TELEVISION
£24,000

This media conglomerate needs a professional energetic PA who enjoys liaising and negotiating at senior level. Located south of the river. This role will suit a self starter with good shorthand and a flexible attitude. 55wpm typing, 90wpm shorthand, Windows literate. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSRECRUITMENT
CONSULTANT

We are a top secretarial recruitment consultancy with blue chip clients throughout London. We can offer you ongoing training, a competitive salary and generous commission. You will be a graduate with 1 year's commercial experience and excellent communication skills. No recruitment experience necessary. Please telephone Fiona Dowell 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSFASHION
£23,000

This leading women's fashion group have an opening for a PA to join at board level. You will undertake your own projects, organise events, liaise with clients and become involved in office management. Retail background preferred. 60wpm typing essential.

Please telephone 0171 495 2321
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSINVOLVEMENT
£21,500

As the main focal point when your two directors are away, you will be privy to confidential information and know exactly what is going on. Involved in their various business interests, you will look after very basic accounts too. Initially a maternity contract. Skills 80/50.

Please telephone 0171 628 9529.
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSIT PA
£24,000 + BENEFITS

Supporting the IT Director of this respected large city company, in addition to full secretarial support you will have opportunities to expand the role and take on additional challenges. WPM, Excel & Powerpoint essential.

Please telephone on 0171 628 9529
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSPERMANENT SOLUTIONS
THAT ARE HEAVEN SENT!

SECRETARY FULHAM £16,000
Grip this opportunity to get really stuck into a varied job immediately! Working with one other you will be looking after a Chairman & Finance Director, providing efficient secretarial / administrative support. With a cheerful, willing personality and Windows & Excel experience, you will need to use your initiative as you may also be involved in project research, or designing new administrative procedures.

SECRETARY/ASSISTANT WIMBLEDON VILLAGE £14,000
A friendly, welcoming, family run business have challenged us to find an efficient secretary with common sense & initiative who has the maturity & flexibility to get really involved and contribute to their team. You will have proficient Word & Excel and be a natural organiser. Immediate start, so don't miss out - call us now!

SALES SECRETARY PUTNEY £13,000
Lively, fantastically busy sales team need a highly organised, flexible secretary to keep everything running smoothly. With Excel, Word and 40+ wpm typing you will be producing proposals, drafting letters, reports, and handling invoices, whilst your professional interpersonal skills are vital when dealing with clients, arranging reservations & answering important phone calls. Luxurious modern offices.

ADMINISTRATOR RAYNES PARK £12,000-£16,000
An administrative position with a distinctive financial flavour. Reward your financial background with this challenging role in a leading company. Involving reconciliation, direct debit collection, updating the 'new business' database and liaising with clients and customers your professional manner & approach will prove invaluable. Very friendly team with a mixture of personalities.

As well as these opportunities, we currently have an excellent selection of vacancies between £12,000 - £25,000 so please call DIANNE NATALE A.S.P. for further details on 0181 542 8888. Or pop in and see us at 44 The Broadway, London SW19 1RQ. WE ARE OPEN LATE EVERY WEDNESDAY FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.

Office
Angels
Recruitment Consultants

TEAM SECRETARY £14,000 - £16,000 HAMMERSMITH

Ref: 3346
Fast moving PR Company seek an efficient, diligent Secretary to support a growing team. A truly work hard, play hard environment, this role offers plenty of variety for those looking to move in a more creative direction.

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR £15,000 HAMMERSMITH
Ref: 3344
Responsible for the management of departmental reports, the distribution of project statistics & the production of support material, this post is ideal for a 'switched on' administrator, keen to utilise their advanced MS Office skills to the full in a well respected post.

ADMINISTRATOR £15,000 CHISWICK
Ref: 3341
A newly created post, this is a golden opportunity for a proactive, self motivated administrator to shape a role from the very start. Providing key support to a hectic Regional Manager, your enterprising approach to problem solving will reward you with this varied & involved career move. To start asap.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR £13,000 W10
Ref: 3343
If you can offer a friendly, helpful admin service then we're sure your talents will soon find you indispensable. There's no pressure to the role but you will find your responsibilities growing with your experience - & likewise so will your salary! Good numeracy & literacy is a must.

OFFICE ASSISTANT £9,000-£11,000 KENSINGTON
Ref: 3350
Get your feet on the first rung of the career ladder - & gain a wealth of experience at the same time! Involved in all aspects of office work, from filing to handling customer calls, a well determined 1st jobber will be rewarded with full training & good promotional prospects.

SALES ADMINISTRATOR £13,000 CHISWICK
Ref: 3353
Kick start your career with this busy role working as part of a large & loud (as they are!) Sales team. From prospecting & negotiating business & developing brochures, to updating daily sales charts, if you're a calm & organised 2nd jobber then this TV Company need you! Interviewing to start next week.

Interested? Call
RENE
on 0181 741 8080.
We'd love to hear from you.
12 Hammersmith,
Broadway, London,
W6 7AB.

Office
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Recruitment ConsultantsWA
TEMPS!

Are you looking for interesting and varied temporary assignments with excellent rates of pay? With clients in the City and West End, we offer both short and long term secretarial assignments. Can you offer:

- a solid CV
- secretarial skills and 60wpm
- in-depth knowledge of one or more windows package
- shorthand (added advantage but not an essential)
- a sense of humour!

If you can offer the above then call our temporary team.

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VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

Career moves
OFFICE MANAGER
£25,000

This is a pivotal and highly responsible role created by the expansion of this successful media company with offices in the West End. You should have 3-4 years office management experience for a company of 50+ people, and also be well-versed and experienced on up-to-date IT packages.

Your role will encompass the co-ordination and communication of office changes and improvements that you will manage, the liaison between the company's main offices, and the ability to work on your own initiative to solve problems and liaise. You will be responsible for the supervision of a staff manager.

You will need to be fully aware and understanding of the need for change and get new projects off the ground. You will also need to be a team player, self-motivated, and be an organised and efficient administrator. This is a very challenging and rewarding position for the right person.

Apply to Caroline Fook, Kerry Ballard, or Sheryl Karpel.
CAREER MOVES (Rec. Cons.)
Sutherland House, 54 April St, London W1V 1AD
Tel: 0171 286 2300 Fax: 0171 434 6287

GROSVENOR
WORK WITH THE BEST
£20,000

Wonderful opportunity for a bright secretary to join Grosvenor's team. International, high profile, creative company. Interesting, busy role, requiring diplomacy, efficiency and very high standards. Working alongside an amiable Executive Assistant, candidates require 90+ wpm shorthand, good typing & W4Ws. Flex hours considered. Open on age.

GROSVENOR BUREAU
TEL: 0171 499 6566
FAX: 0171 493 6320

Unlock
Your Potential
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Are you constrained by office politics and the sheer size of your company? Frustrated by complex and unwieldy communication structures? Hodge Recruitment has been established in the West End for 16 years and now seeks to capitalise on its reputation for excellence by expanding into the City of London to specialise in providing secretarial recruitment services within the financial markets.

If you would like to be part of a dynamic, professional and driven company, that will let you determine your success and unlock your potential, call Nicky Clarke.

Tel: 0171 628 8863 Fax: 0171 408 0961

AMAZING ADMIN/SEC
£16K+ GYM + BENS

You could not wish for a better position - this job has it all. World leading firm of Management Consultants, young fast moving team, high admin/organisational content, genuine development prospects, paid overtime & constant involvement. Co-ordinating the workload of a fun, busy team of consultants you'll need to prioritise workloads, liaise at all levels and track projects. 40wpm WPM, good quads. Lys admin/sec exp & pro-active approach are the key to this top role.

Interested? Then call us now!

Tel: 0171 287 3664 Fax: 0171 287 3564

NEXT EMPLOYMENT
Aldrich & Company

Marketing PA £19k + £5k package
Work with a team of 4 providing secretarial support but also be responsible for organising and attending seminars and conferences in the UK. You must love admin and organising for this high profile role. Call Sarah Turnbull.

PA to Senior Director £21k + O/T & full bens
Leading Investment Bank - Financial Markets Division. Reporting to a fabulous boss who delegates. Organising corporate events, decision making and working on own initiative. Banking experience essential. Call Emma Silverman.

Personnel PA £23k + bank bens
Superb role for dynamic PA / Administrator in this hectic HR department of leading city bank. Lots of admin, organising and involvement. Fantastic team - great fun role. relevant experience preferable. Call Alex Case.

Tel: 0171 588 8999 CITY RECRUITMENT Fax: 0171 588 8998

PA to Director

Excellent Package
The Director of this expanding US Company urgently needs an extremely efficient, proactive and organised PA, used to working under pressure and to deadlines. It is a key support role involving a wide mix of administrative duties and responsibility. To succeed in this challenging role you will have excellent written and verbal skills, be computer literate with Word and Excel (detailed spreadsheet work) and will be well educated, with a minimum of five years PA experience. The ability to use your own initiative and work as part of a team is essential.

To apply, write with full CV to:
Central Parking System,
61 Piccadilly, Second Floor,
London W1V 9HF or
Fax to 0171 628 1013.

RECEPTIONIST/
PA
£15,500

Bright enthusiastic 2nd jobber to assist with Team. Typing 35 Lines per minute.

Tel: 0171 287 0999
Fax: 0171 287 0717
RECEPTIONIST/BUREAU

Judy Farquharson Ltd.

MARKETING, PR AND RESEARCH
Secretary/Admin Assistant £16-18,000
For well known department store in Croydon. Need excellent writing skills to produce a company manual and general admin. 10+ years exp. and 2 years' secretarial experience.
Admin Assistant - Research Consultancy £15,000
An excellent opportunity for a college leaver to join a busy consultancy. Admin and reception work. Must have at least 6 months' office experience, typing 50wpm.
Receptionist - Luxury goods, Bond Street £14,000
Greeting clients, telephone, typing, general admin. Must be available now.
PR Secretary £12,000
An excellent start with a corporate PR agency in W1. Would suit a college leaver. 50+ wpm typing, excellent written skills.
Graduate Secretary/Admin Assistant £12-14,000
Lots of initiative, 6 months' office experience to join busy young marketing division. 50wpm typing, good telephone manner and writing skills.
Please fax or send CV's to Juliette Wood
47 New Bond St, London W1V 9HA
Tel: 0171-493 8824 Fax: 0171-493 7161
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

SHEILA CHILDS RECRUITMENT

STATE OF QATAR
£25,000 TAX-FREE SALARY
Based in Doha, the demands and expectations of this job are exceptional and can be matched only by an equally exceptional candidate. Supporting the Chairman of a well-established, ambitious company with offices throughout Europe and the Middle East, the role calls for a Professional Executive of the highest calibre.

As a self-starter, highly experienced PA your administrative control and managerial skills have been well honed and your naturally sympathetic approach brings confidence to you and your colleagues. Relentless pressure will be second nature to you and you will be proud of your inimitable stamina and zest for the challenges of an unpredictable daily workload. Others perceive you as a Superwoman - are you? Age 35-50, computer literate, 75wpm and shorthand of at least 80wpm. The salary is accompanied by a full and generous expatriate package. Curriculum vitae with photograph please by post.

4 Ganton Street, London W1V 1LJ
Telephone: 0171 437 3111 Fax: 0171 437 4350

Tel: 0171 680 6806

Language Opportunities

Multilingual Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

Language Opportunities

APPOINTMENTS Bi~LANGUAGE

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
FOR
2ND JOBBERS
(WITH OR WITHOUT LANGUAGES)

We have a wide range of assignments for candidates with excellent secretarial skills (30 wpm consolidated in your first job) in international firms. Long term assignments can often be a way to fast-track into a genuine career. Many of our assignments become permanent. Call James, Edward or Charles for details.

FRENCH
PUBLISHING
£15-16,000 aae

This is a superb opportunity for a motivated and dynamic 2nd jobber to enter the exciting world of publishing. You will use your French daily to communicate with high profile clients. Proven secretarial experience (50 wpm) and busy shorthand.

Tel: 0171-355 1975/0171-734 3380
Fax: 0171-499 0568

For this week's
Crone Corkill
language jobs,
see our 20 Years
Celebration
Page!

BILINGUAL

GERMAN GO-GITTER £16K + OT + Bens (F&C) (F&C) (F&C)
Secret PA with 10 yrs exp. in top investment bank. Confident, prof approach & 100% min exp exp for bank. Confident, prof approach & 100% min exp exp for bank.

MARKET YOUR FRENCH

£15K + full bens
Min exp. French to a level 4, say for full co. This position would suit a 2nd jobber who thrives in a busy environment. Min 30wpm typ, 60 PC skills and POW.

SPANISH STAR

£16K + full bens
Spanish sec. other huge useful, needed for small, friendly team in multi-lingual. Get role in a lively environment with opp for advancement. Call 0171 493 8824, min exp exp exp.

EURO CITY SECRET

£15K + full bens
Superb opp for young linguist with German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish and French for a range of vacancies in customer support. From accounting clerks, admin processes, telemarketing, county co-ordinators, London: Doherty, Docklands, W. London, Jersey. Call immediately for details.

For career advice or to discuss immediate opportunities please bring a cv and visit us at the London Career Day, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, WC2 on Wednesday 23 April 1997 from 9am until 7pm

Personal Assistant
£30,000 - £35,000+ aae

Our Client, a subsidiary of a major Italian bank, is about to open a new office in the City. We are therefore looking for an accomplished Personal Assistant to support both the Vice-General Manager and the General Manager in every aspect of their working lives. As well as possessing first class secretarial skills and a fantastic and relevant track record, it is expected that you will have mother tongue English and fluent Italian. A working knowledge of French and/or Spanish is desired. The position will also involve taking charge of basic personal admin including preparation of payroll for secretaries. Excellent benefits are offered in addition to generous basic salary. Languages skills will be tested. Please apply after the 28th April by phone, fax or post to Sue Donnelly.

Sue Donnelly Recruitment
38A Curzon Street London W1V 7RF
Tel: 0171-491 7911 Fax: 0171-491 7922

Be Indispensable
BI-LINGUAL PA TO MD

(German/English) Rochester

Vallant is a market leader in its field, with headquarters in Germany and a well established and rapidly developing UK operation. Our new MD is not a German speaker, so will be relying heavily on your fluent written and spoken German to liaise with our head office and deal with correspondence and translations. Articulate and numerate, ideally combined with formal secretarial qualifications and a professional attitude, you will be experienced in the use of MS Office inclusive Excel Spreadsheets and graphs. This is an exceptional opportunity to join a successful company in a vital and growing role without having to commute to London. We offer a competitive salary and excellent benefits. Please apply in writing enclosing full CV and details of your current package to Guy Baskin, Vallant Ltd, Vallant House, Hawley City Estate, Tidon Close, Rochester, Kent ME2 4EZ.

Vallant

HEATING, CONTROLS, HOT WATER.

Tel: 0171 287 6060 Fax: 0171 491 4662

BOYCE

Spanish, French or German & Powerpoint

£19,000 + excel.bens

Are you a confident & energetic person with one of the above languages? We currently have openings for dynamic individuals with previous secretarial experience to work in a support capacity within leading investment banks. You will be working within a stimulating and professional environment allowing you to develop your language skills. Opportunities are based within a wide variety of asset managing, Marketing Corporate Finance and Telecommunications. For further information please call us on 0171 287 6060.

Sheila Burgess INTERNATIONAL

recruits Bilingual Secretaries/PAs for

PARIS

Degree level French? See skills? WPM 50wpm? Smart & adaptable? 120-200K? Next interviews London - week of 28/4

Tel: 0171-584 6446
Tel/Fax: 0833-144 63 62 57/59

BI-LING. TEAM SEC
To £20K

A proactive SEC, with an outgoing personality able to deal with top people in the City. You will support a young team, will likely have excellent secretarial skills and be fluent in a language, preferably French. Excellent career opportunity. Ref: 7016.

Tel: 0171 293 7000

FRENCH - Secretarial support to

Senior Manager, Project Manager, etc. 100% min exp exp exp.

£15K + full bens
Min exp. French to a level 4, say for full co. This position would suit a 2nd jobber who thrives in a busy environment. Min 30wpm typ, 60 PC skills and POW.

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Min exp. French to a level 4, say for full co. This position would suit a 2nd jobber who thrives in a busy environment. Min 30wpm typ, 60 PC skills and POW.

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RECRUITMENT
CONSULTANT

to join the Recruitment Section of our language business.

We are looking for an experienced Recruitment Consultant who would like to work in the expanding field of languages and use fluent German, Spanish, French or Italian or other language(s).

We are offering a competitive basic salary together with a scale of commission which will reward the successful Consultant very well indeed.

We have recently moved to spacious and prestigious new offices in the Haymarket where a state-of-the-art computer network has just been installed.

Our team has both the marketing assistance of our New Business Manager and administrative support.

Above all, you will benefit by the second-to-none reputation of Multilingual Services, built up over many years in recruitment, interpreting and translating.

Please call George Knapp for an initial discussion in the strictest confidence on 0171 930 4880

Fax: 0171 839 6756
Internet: recmt@multilingual.co.uk

Multilingual

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BI-LINGUAL
PA/SEC
£19,000

Bond St. stockbroking house needs fluent FRENCH speaker to work with the Vice President. Lots of admin, secretarial support and lots of involvement for right person. Salary commensurate with exp. & benefits. Call 0171 287 0999.

Call 0171 287 0999
Fax: 0171 287 0717
MIDDLETON JEFFERS

COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT

to Director of busy thinking G Sales Co. Exp. 10 yrs. in sales & marketing. Excellent salary & benefits. Call 0171 287 0999.

Call 0171 287 0999
Fax: 0171 287 0717
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Tel: 0171 680 6806

Administrative

SNOOKER

Parrott in the pink after Jones takes him to final frame

By PHIL YATES

JOHN PARROTT was given the fright of his life before scraping past Bradley Jones, the world No 19, 10-9 in the first round of the Embassy world championship at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, yesterday.

Parrott, the only player other than Stephen Hendry to capture the game's most coveted title during the 1990s, exhibited a steely nerve to pot the pink to a distant back pocket in the closing frame as he finally shook off the unexpectedly resilient Jones.

That gave Jones, who did not collect a penny in prize-money last season, the lead at 7-6, but Parrott then benefited from his most productive spell of the match. In winning the next two frames for 8-7 with runs of 90 and 102, he compiled 197 points without reply.

Given his shortage of experience, Jones, 22, was entitled to buckle. Instead, he responded by emphatically taking the sixteenth frame and edged one up with two to play at 9-8. Suddenly, Jones, from Croydon, was on the verge of an astonishing victory.

Trailing 43-28 in the eighteenth frame, but with the reds ideally positioned, Jones gave

RESULTS

FIRST ROUND: Yesterday: A McManus (Scotland) vs W Snaddon (Scotland) 10-9; N Band (England) vs S Lee (England) 5-4; P Parrott (England) vs B Jones (England) 10-9. Monday: S Davis (England) vs D McLeish (Scotland) 10-2.

Television coverage from Sheffield is on BBC1 at 11.35am-12.30pm, 2.10pm-3.30pm and on BBC2 from 3.30pm to 4pm, 6.45pm-7.30pm, 11.30pm-12.30am.

an indication that the pressure was becoming a little too intense by missing a routine black off its spot. Parrott coolly made 40 to bring up 9-9.

Lightning struck twice when, early in the decider, Jones missed an easy black. Parrott led 47-26 when he narrowly failed to sink the last

red down the length of the side cushion and Jones cleared to blue, but, needing to pot only pink and black to progress, he rattled the penultimate colour.

A relieved Parrott committed no such mistake as he secured a meeting with Anthony Hamilton, from Nottingham, or Jimmy White, the Crucible's perennial nearly-man.

Billy Snaddon, from Scotland, who has played countless practice sessions with Hendry in recent years, failed to display the killer instinct associated with his more celebrated compatriot when he was beaten 10-9 by Alan McManus, yet another who hails from north of the border, after leading 8-4 and 9-8.

Snaddon, who needed to earn a meeting in the last 16 with Lee Walker to guarantee his place in the game's top 32 players next season, was poised to add McManus to the list of notable casualties when he led 58-0 in the thirteenth frame.

The turning point came when Snaddon missed a relatively straightforward red. McManus, the No 6 seed, eventually fashioned a courageous 65 clearance to steal the frame on the black and, multiplying the doubts that he had planted in his opponent's mind, he won the next frame on the blue after Snaddon had clumsily gone in-off when potting the yellow.

Having seen McManus recover to 8-8, Snaddon temporarily halted his slide by registering a decisive 66 break in the seventeenth frame, but still found it impossible to apply the finishing touches. McManus carried the match its full distance before prevailing in a tense decider by cross-doubling the brown off the side cushion to a corner pocket.

"I really struggled to get to grips with the pressure," McManus, who clearly did not struggle to quite the same extent as Snaddon, said. "At 8-4, I honestly thought I was on my way home and I knew my only hope was to grind it out. Billy must be bitterly disappointed." He was.

Nigel Bond, the runner-up to Hendry in the 1995 championship, was fully stretched before establishing a 5-4 lead over Stephen Lee, a candidate for being the most improved player on the professional circuit this season.

Lee, responsible for breaks of 64, 96 and 66, was set to carry a slender advantage into the concluding session last night when he led 59-0 in the ninth frame, but Bond claimed it from him on the black with a cleverly-crafted 59 clearance.

Where jumping fraternity feel at home

ANDREW LONGMORE



At Punchestown Festival

The dapper little man in the tweed jacket and the glasses was celebrating as if he had won the Grand National himself. "Jeez, that was a great run. Did you see the way he took the Bank?" All around nodded agreement. Skated the dreaded Bank he had, and run a blinder.

The object of all the adulation was looking a trifle sore in his legs and putting fit to bust, but nothing was going to dampen the spirits of his connections. After all, Tamer's Run had finished a gallant fifth and for a horse bought for next to nothing out of a yard which thought he was finished that was indeed a blinder.

"Winning is lovely," Charlie O'Neill, the owner, reflected. "But that's not important to me. I just love to be involved because of the pleasure it gives me." O'Neill had once bred, trained and ridden a horse called Hellfire Hostess to finish tenth of 26 in the Sun Alliance at Cheltenham. It was, he says, the greatest thrill of his life, but, the following morning, he was back on his farm milking his cows.

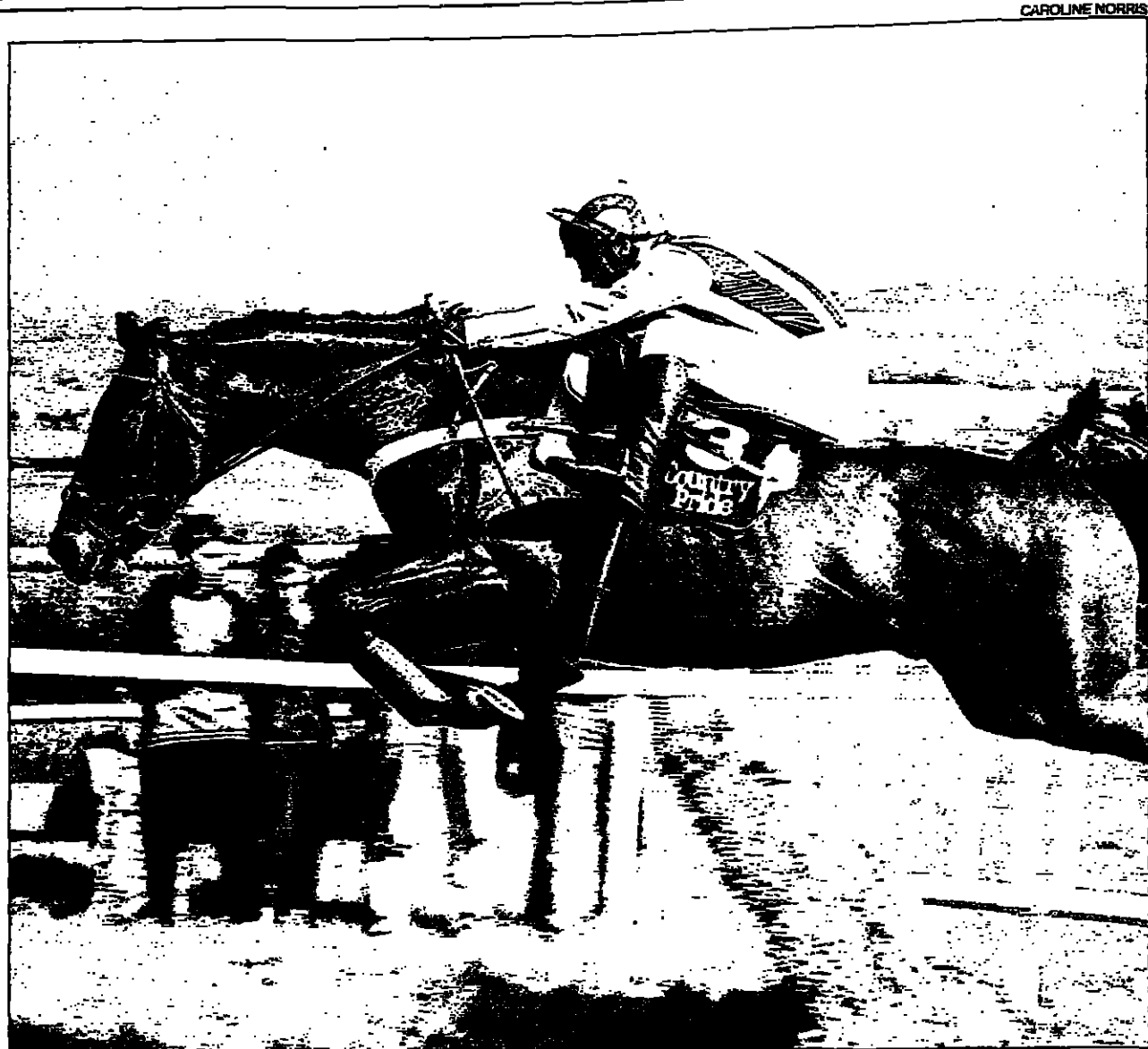
Like the majority of the 20,000 or so present at the opening day of the Punchestown Festival yesterday, O'Neill knows his racing, not as a punter, casual observer or hanger-on, but deep down from the cradle.

"I was taught to ride like any farmer's son round here," he said. "There are no divisions here, no glass cages. Everyone here has a genuine affinity for horses, not just for racing."

At Punchestown, you can sit down next to a man like Robert Connan, learn that he is a qualified solicitor and find that he rides out every morning before he goes into the office, once rode the winner of the charity race at Punchestown and is the nephew of Bobbie Connan, who rode Captain Christy to victory in the King George VI Chase.

This is not so much a race meeting as a gathering of a big sporting family and to mark the occasion, the banks are closed, the schools close and the pubs open until the last man rolls home. At Punchestown too, your card is marked by the famed racing priest, Father Breen, who has built up quite a following for his Sunday sermons.

O'Neill may not be the Sheikh Mohammed of Irish



Midnight Legend, stretching out under Richard Johnson, is one of two English-trained winners yesterday

jump racing, but as one of the masters of the Kildare Hunt, which owns Punchestown, he has a status inside the most coveted racing parish in Ireland, quite apart from the free tickets which are distributed liberally to the local farmers to thank them for their co-operation during the hunting season. "I don't know anyone in the course who actually pays to come in," as one local journalist said.

Over the next two years, O'Neill's will be an important voice in the £7 million development of the course from the spiritual home of Irish jump racing into a world-class centre, which will be used for the World Equestrian Games in the summer of 1998.

"It's taken a long time to get the racing upmarket, now we have to upgrade the facilities. These are just not good enough," he said, the sweep of his arm taking in a row of corrugated iron sheds and open air toilets which ceased being quaint a decade ago. The danger is that the peculiar charms of the Festival will be lost in the transformation.

In the enclosures, the air of prosperity is unmistakable. Every one of the 24 races over

the three days has been sponsored, the corporate marquees are overflowing and the prize-money on offer has more than doubled over the past five years to a record total of

£550,000. Interest from across the Irish Sea increases every year. Two English-trained winners yesterday, Midnight Legend and Linton Rocks,

silenced the Irish roar, though an impeccable pillar-to-post victory by Klairon Davis in the big race of the day, the BMW Handicap Chase, balanced the books at least.

For David Nicholson, trainer of Midnight Legend, Punchestown is a chance not just to add to his considerable winnings, but to survey some of Ireland's best jumping talent for next season. Anyone from overseas who buys a horse here is refunded part of their air-fare by Irish Thoroughbred Marketing. In Ireland, such encouragement is second nature. Victory for Midnight Legend was another triumph for owner Stan Clarke, whose Lord Gyllene won the postponed Grand National earlier this month. This was his first runner in Ireland.

Nicholson was clearly under the influence of the craic by mid-afternoon. He gave his jockey, Richard Johnson, four sets of instructions before the race. Wisely, Johnson ignored them all. "This is like Cheltenham was 20 years ago," Charlie O'Neill said. And he rushed off, still fizzing from the delight of just being involved.

PUNCESTOWN LINE-UPS C4

2.40 STANLEY COOKER CHAMPION NOVICE HURDLE

(Grade 1, £18,600, 2m 4f, 18 runners)

1	21224-4	CLOWAGHAN 177F (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	J. J. O'Shea
2	11-212	UPPER BROS 21 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	C. O'Dwyer
3	0825-1	ELLEN 142 (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	T. P. Hanley
4	2211-11	STARHED 42 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	C. F. Swan
5	2111	ADRIAN 23 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	N. Williamson
6	33-213	BURD BOW 21 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	T. P. Hanley
7	11214	NOVA 42 (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	N. Williamson
8	11215	SOLDAT 42 (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	R. Donohoe

BETTING: 4-6 Clowaghan 5-11, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12.

3.15 HEINEKEN GOLD CUP

(Grade 1, handicap chase, £27,200, 3m 1f, 18 runners)

1	9P-115	CORRY 42 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	T. Hanley
2	115-252	AMBLE SPEEDY 23 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	F. Woods
3	212-214	BARLOW 23 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	C. F. Swan
4	125-121	WOODVILLE STAR 24 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	C. O'Dwyer
5	113P-11	THE OUTBACK WAY 21 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	D. H. O'Connor
6	01-1115	BOBBAD 31 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	G. Collier
7	11214	NOVA 42 (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	N. Williamson
8	44131	PRATE BOX 23 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	G. Bradley
9	01-241	UNW IT UP 23 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	A. P. McElroy
10	815-1	BALLINACREHAN 25 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	T. P. Hanley
11	1133-4	STROLL HOME 22 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	R. Johnson
12	44612	TELL THE NEPHER 24 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	R. Donohoe
13	11328	CAROL'S CRUSADER 25 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	R. Donohoe
14	11314	NOVA 42 (5-11) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	N. Williamson
15	53121P	GENERAL POWELL 42 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	M. A. Fitzgerald
16	0811	LORD ALF 21 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	J. K. Namee
17	34-118	SANDWICH WIND 21 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	J. K. Namee
18	73P-11	THE SPOONER 22 (5-5) (J. J. O'Shea) 11-12	L. P. Connelley

BETTING: 5-2 Amble Speedy 5-11, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12, 11-12.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Goodway victim of confidence vote

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

THE increasing trend to hire and fire Super League coaches claimed its fifth victim yesterday, six weeks into the season, when Andy Goodway parted company with Oldham Bears.

After the recent departure of John Joyner from Castleford Tigers, in the game's rapid turnover, two men strongly tipped for the Great Britain position now find themselves out of a job.

Goodway had been at the club since May 1994 and was the longest-serving coach in the 12-team competition. Jim Quinn, the Oldham chairman, who had persuaded Goodway to stay for the remainder of the season when he threatened to leave last month, and last week gave him a vote of confidence after the side's only win in seven matches, acted on the board's initiative.

"Things have not been right behind the scenes since Andy threatened to resign after the defeat at Salford on Good Friday," Quinn said. "He is a hard-working young man, who is keen to build a successful coaching career, and I am

sure he will do that in the future of time."

Goodway, 35, the former Britain forward, might seek a move to coach in Australia, from where Bob Lindner, his predecessor, is due to return as Oldham's football director. Lindner, who had a brief spell in charge as player-coach, in 1994, will name successors to Goodway and Alan McCurrie, the assistant coach, who also went yesterday.

The departure of Joyner and Goodway, former Great Britain assistant coaches, has reduced the options for Joe Lydon, the Rugby Football League's new technical director, when he comes to nominate a possible successor to Phil Larder as the Britain coach for the three-match home series against Australia, in November.

Bradford Bulls must retain the last unbeaten record in the Super League in their home derby encounter tonight, which Halifax Blue Sox surprisingly won last year, to move ahead of St Helens at the top of the table by two points.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHANCERY COMMISSION
Chancery Barristers, 100, Strand, London WC2R 0JH.
The Commission is now open for the receipt of applications for the grant of probate or letters of administration in cases where the deceased died on or after 1st January 1997.

LEGAL NOTICES

In the High Court of Justice
No 372 of 1997
Chancery Division
Harcourt Group Plc
and in the Matter of
The Companies Act 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on the 12th March 1997 presented to the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division, in the matter of the above-named company, for an order that the company be wound up. The Petition was presented by the Liquidator of the company, who is entitled to present the same. The Petition was supported by the Liquidator's affidavit, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's solicitor, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's accountant, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's auditor, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's manager, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's secretary, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's clerk, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's receptionist, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's cleaner, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. The Petition was also supported by the affidavit of the Liquidator's gardener, which stated that the company was unable to pay its debts as they fell due. 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FOOTBALL

Peace breaks out as Brighton shift balance of power

BY NICK SZCZEPANIK

AFTER a year of pitch invasions, demonstrations and boycotts, supporters of Brighton and Hove Albion finally got the result they wanted yesterday when details were revealed of an arrangement, brokered by the Football Association through the Centre for Dispute Resolution (CEDR), for the restructuring of the Nationwide League's bottom club, which needs to win its two remaining matches to avoid relegation to the Vauxhall Conference.

Under the terms of the deal, the existing board of directors, although retaining 49% per cent of the shareholding, will relinquish control of the club. The new chairman will be Dick Knight, the 58-year-old leader of a consortium that will have an equal holding. The remaining one per cent will be held by Martin Perry, a director of Alfred McAlpine, the developers expected to build a new 15,000-25,000 seat stadium to replace the Goldstone Ground, the sale of

which by the previous regime precipitated the protests. It will stage its last game, against Doncaster Rovers, on Saturday.

Bill Archer, the outgoing chairman, and the focus of a concerted campaign that has seen "Archer out" posters appear on the lower slopes of Mount Everest, will remain on the board, but acknowledged his part in the stormy events of the past 12 months. "I would like to apologise for all the trauma and distress I have caused people," Archer said. "But it was a price worth paying. We were forcing a very emotional issue, but we're going to get a brand new stadium."

Knight, his successor, promised a £2 million investment in players, supporters' representation in the boardroom, and that all efforts would be made to secure a temporary ground within Brighton and Hove while the new stadium takes shape. However, no announcement is

expected before the end of this season.

"I, my co-directors, the FA and CEDR are satisfied with the outcome and I hope the supporters will be satisfied too," Knight said. "For the good of the club, we must all get on with rebuilding the Albion to prove that every single person's effort has been worthwhile."

Supporters welcomed the announcement. "Excellent news," Paul Samrah, of the Brighton Independent Supporters Association, said. "It's everything we wanted. Bill Archer has relinquished control, which was the main point and I would urge everyone in Brighton and Hove to get behind the team and the club."

Knight, in turn, paid tribute to the supporters, whose "creativity" he hoped the club would be able to harness. "I want to thank all Albion fans for their resilience and patience over the last months. I'm looking forward to being chairman, but I take the post with some humility — the last year has been a fantastic show of the emotional ties that bind supporters and clubs."

The deal, negotiated over a period of 20 weeks, represents the FA's first use of a commercial mediation service, and involved discussions with supporters as well as the board and the consortium. "It was probably the most difficult negotiation I've experienced," David Richbell, of CEDR, said. "Emotion has been a very high part of this mediation, because people feel football from the heart. We're hoping to be there on Saturday as our reward. We've done our bit — it's up to the others now, but they are committed to it."

For the FA, David Davies said: "All the effort has proved worthwhile. Today marks a new beginning for a famous football club with supporters who care deeply about it."



Marcello Lippi, the Juventus coach, takes his players through their paces yesterday in training before the semi-final second leg with Ajax

Ajax find cause for optimism in Italy

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

IT SEEMED like a foregone conclusion. Two quick goals, a dominant, almost arrogant display and an easy away win that reduced a European Cup semi-final between the two most successful teams of the past two years to almost a mismatch. And then Juventus lost to Udinese.

It was an extraordinary result, its manner even more so. Ten days ago, in front of their own supporters at the Stadio Delle Alpi in Turin, Juventus found themselves playing against ten men from just the second minute, after Genoa, a Udinese defender, had been dismissed — and somehow lost 3-0. Louis van Gaal, the coach of Ajax, whose

team had been beaten so convincingly just four days earlier, could barely believe his ears when he heard the score.

Last weekend, Van Gaal was in Italy to see for himself whether it was an aberration or whether the European champions really were struggling. Not struggling, perhaps, but a 1-0 defeat of Bologna still gave Van Gaal renewed grounds for optimism.

"They looked tired to me," he said yesterday. "The first real scoring chance fell to the other team and, if they had taken it, I don't know how the match would have finished. We, too, had the first scoring chance in the first leg against Juventus, but missed. That's football. Now we'll be obliged

to attack and to score an early goal that will revive our hopes and make Juventus start to have doubts."

"I can't help asking myself if Juventus, who are unquestionably the best in the world, will be able to repeat their extraordinary performance in the first leg. It will be easier for us to continue the way we played in the second half, when, with more pride than cool-headedness, we were able to take the game in hand."

Van Gaal may have a point. Juventus, who took control of the tie with goals by Amoroso and Vieri in the Amsterdam Arena, were showing concern yesterday over the threat posed by Jari Litmanen, the Finland captain, who scored Ajax's reply in their 2-1 first-

leg defeat and who scored in the European Cup final between the two sides last season.

"Angelo Peruzzi [the Juventus goalkeeper] has already started to warn us about Litmanen," Ciro Ferrara, the Italians' stalwart defender, said. "He keeps on telling us to keep an eye on him. I think he is pretty much outstanding. He's hard to control, he moves around a lot and finds the openings. He scored in Amsterdam because he found the space, while in Rome in the final he took advantage of one of our defensive errors."

Litmanen arrived in Italy this week with an as yet unidentified injury and although he will have a fitness test this morning, he will play.

"Even if I'm not at my best, I'll be there," he said. "I cannot miss one of the most important matches of my career." Particularly since Patrick Kluitert, the other leading Ajax striker, is a definite non-starter. Juventus will miss the injured Del Piero and suspended Jugovic, but remain an intimidating prospect.

Ajax's intimidating days may be coming to an end, for a while at least. A number of key players left last season, more, including Kluitert and Winston Bogarde, will do so in the summer and Van Gaal concluded: "My players know full well that a cycle could be coming to an end in Turin, but they want to finish it in the best way possible, with their heads high."

Francis resigned to the loss of Iversen

STEFFEN IVERSEN, Tottenham Hotspur's Norwegian striker, is the latest player at White Hart Lane forced to submit to surgery that will rule him out for the rest of the season.

Iversen will have an operation today to remove a cyst from the inside of his knee cap and Gerry Francis, his manager, who had 13 senior players unavailable through injury for a match at Aston Villa last Saturday, said: "We are getting used to this."

Stuart Nethercott, the centre back, is also out for the rest of the campaign after damaging knee ligaments.

Gary Charles, the former England international, began

his comeback after a year out of action with an ankle injury when playing for Aston Villa reserves in a 4-1 win against Sheffield United yesterday.

Portsmouth's defender, the Leicester City defender, will make his return to the Sweden team in the World Cup group four qualifying game against Scotland on April 30.

SWEDISH PARTY: Goalkeepers: M. Hedman (AIK), T. Ravelli (IFK Gothenburg); Defenders: P. Andersson (Borussia Monchengladbach), J. Berglund (Flensburg), C. Karlsson (Malmö FF), P. Karlmark (Leicester City), J. Malmgren (Gyömré), G. Sundgren (AIK), Midfield players: H. Andersson (IFK Gothenburg), J. Björnsen (AC Milan), H. Mid (IFK Gothenburg), S. Schwartz (Frosinone), J. Thörn (Göteborg), P. Wikström (IFK Helsingborg), P. Zetterberg (Andersson); Forwards: A. Andersson (IFK Gothenburg), K. Andersson (Borussia Mönchengladbach), M. Dahlén (Borussia Mönchengladbach), P. Persson (Borussia Mönchengladbach), J. Simpson (AIK).

Celtic's temperament on trial in semi-final replay

BY KEVIN MCCARRA

CELTIC approach the Tennents Scottish Cup semi-final replay against Falkirk tonight with the stealth of a cat burglar. There has been a resounding silence, with neither Tommy Burns, the club's manager, nor his assistant, Billy Stark, available for comment. Instead, only a single-sentence communiqué, detailing injuries, was faxed to newspapers.

The reticence might be seen as a reprisal for weeks of speculation about Burns' future with the club. It is also possible, however, that the manager has recognised that the moment for speechlessness has arrived. Too many words have already spilled out this season and Celtic may feel that it is time quietly to attend to business.

The need for a further match with Falkirk, modest performers in the Scottish League first division, was another instance of the recurring fallibility in Burns' team. Doggedly though Falkirk played, only nervousness prevented Celtic from building a substantial lead 11 days ago.

As it was, they were just one goal in front when a sweeping cross from Jamie McGowan

allowed Kevin James to head home for Falkirk. That 1-1 draw will be indulged by supporters as an idiosyncrasy of Celtic itself, but failure would surely end Burns' career as manager at the club.

His side defeated Aberdeen 3-0 on Sunday, ending a sequence of five matches without a win, and seemed, in the process, to recover a smoothness of movement that would easily outmanoeuvre Falkirk. Celtic should, in addition, be capable of even greater sophistication tonight.

Paul McStay, Celtic's fax assured the world, is fit once again, having missed the past two games with a groin injury, and his ability to direct the play should provide them with an authority absent in the first attempt at the semi-final.

Tommy Johnson, the former Aston Villa forward, is also available and Peter Grant, the midfielder, is now free of suspension, while Paolo di Canio has recovered from a knock to his knee.

Enumerating the personnel is a futile exercise, however, where Celtic are concerned. The capacity of the team to excel, whatever its make-up, against Falkirk is not in doubt

and the real questions are ones of temperament. All season, Celtic have shown a knack for embroiling themselves in difficulties.

The loss of all four League fixtures to Rangers was galling for supporters, but it is significant, too, that Celtic have dropped points against the bottom two clubs in the premier division, losing to Motherwell and drawing with Raith Rovers.

They have yet to prove that they can live at peace with their own ambition. The craving for a trophy seems to disable each attempt to win one and there have been no honours for Celtic since the Scottish Cup in 1995. The real task for Burns' side lies not so much in surmounting the challenge of Falkirk as in finding a way out of their own neuroses.

Celtic may be in a labyrinth, but for Alex Totten's side the journey ahead is simple. He has a fit squad which, he feels, should have drawn confidence from the 1-1 draw. Despite the experience of men such as Andy Gray, who was once capped by England, serenity of mind should not, all the same, be enough to save Falkirk from defeat.

Arsenal's squad too small for Europe

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

ARSENE WENGER, the Arsenal manager, has admitted that he will need to strengthen his squad considerably if they are to be a force in Europe next season. Arsenal need another three points to ensure a UEFA Cup place at least, after drawing 1-1 at Coventry City on Monday night. The alternative is to finish as runners-up and claim a place in the Champions' League.

But whichever continental boards are to be trod by Arsenal, Wenger is already aware that the squad will have to be supplemented and he has targeted one specific age group.

Wenger, who saw Ian Wright's penalty cancel out Dion Dublin's early effort for Coventry, admitted: "At the moment we have a group of players around the 20-mark and then there are another group of players who are over 30."

"We need to bring in three or four players in the 20 to 27 age bracket, people of quality, and to continue working with the youngsters we have here already. At the moment the squad isn't big enough. I've drawn up a list of the players I want for next season but they are only in my mind for now."

Wenger, however, will not be changing his insistence on playing the ball out from defence, even though it nearly cost Arsenal their point at Coventry.

He said: "Why hit the ball long? If you do that, you give it away many times and we do not have a Dion Dublin-type player up front who can take every ball with his head. I prefer us to play it out."

Wright seemed even more agitated than usual and collected his second yellow card in successive matches for a late challenge on Brian Borrows.

But Wright found an ally in the Coventry striker, Noel Whelan, who said: "It's just his character. That's the way Ian is and it is quite funny. You've got to accept it. He has his own little way of going about things."

Gordon Strachan, the Coventry player-manager, was left bemusing the fact that the newly found passion and commitment of his players was not unearthed earlier in the season.

Had that been harnessed to the undoubted ability in the squad, then Coventry would now be in mid-table rather than still looking over their shoulders at the bottom three.

Forest turn to Fettis in search for a saviour

BY RICHARD HOBSON

IT WILL come as no consolation to David James, but the troubled Liverpool custodian is not the only member of the goalkeepers' union in difficulty at present. There are likely to be doubts of one sort or another over each of the four keepers in action in the FA Carling Premiership tonight.

Nottingham Forest, who visit Derby County, must rely on their second choice, Alan Fettis, for the last three games of the season because Mark Crossley has succumbed to a long-standing double hernia problem and will undergo surgery this week.

As those offering support to James have testified, there is a correlation between safe hands and self-belief, yet Forest have hardly imbued Fettis, a Northern Ireland international, with confidence. When Crossley was absent in March, Stuart Pearce, the player-manager, delayed Tommy Wright's transfer to Manchester City rather than select Fettis.

Forest have drawn five of their past six games, but remain bottom of the table and realistically must win each of their last three fixtures to avoid relegation for the second time in four years.

Pearce and Colin Cooper are rated doubtful this evening, while the news that Kevin Campbell is fit again is unlikely to lift supporters' morale.

"If we stayed up, it would be the Houdini act to beat them all," Dave Bassett, the general manager, admitted. "Alarm bells should have rung when we lost our second game of the season 4-1 to Sunderland, but we have been in freefall since."

Ghana were reported to have dropped the Leeds United striker, Tony Yeboah, for the World Cup qualifying match against Gabon in Accra on Sunday, blaming poor form and a possible disciplinary action pending.

Jim Smith, the Derby manager, is considering whether to drop Russell Hoult for the second time this season after the keeper's errors against Newcastle United last Saturday. Even if Mark Poom, his first choice, fails to recover from a shoulder problem, Smith may turn to Martin Taylor, who was recently loaned to Wycombe Wanderers.

West Ham United have the

most difficult run-in of the bottom clubs. With Julian Dicks ruled out for the season after a knee operation yesterday, they meet Leicester City at Filbert Street tonight before facing Sheffield Wednesday, Newcastle and Manchester United in their three remaining fixtures.

Harry Redknapp, the manager, was quick to blame John Hartson for allowing Paul Kitson to take the penalty against Everton that should have opened up a decisive 3-0 lead, but Ludek Miklosko has been uneasy of late and was responsible for both Everton goals. The Czech maintains his place, however.

Kasey Keller returns for Leicester City after keeping goal for the United States in a World Cup qualifying match against Mexico, though not with a warm embrace from Martin O'Neill, the manager. "We are paying Kasey's wages, but he keeps missing our games because the United States have the first call," O'Neill said. "It is a bone of contention and we have to work out an agreement for next season or get somebody else in, but Steve Sampson [the United States coach] does not return my calls."

TENNIS: BECKER AND MUSTER JOIN WORLD NO 1 IN BECOMING FIRST-ROUND CASUALTIES AT MONTE CARLO

Exit of Sampras leaves stage clear for lesser lights

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF



Santoro resolve

PETE SAMPRAS, the world No. 1, joined the exodus of seeds at the Monte Carlo Open yesterday when he was beaten 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 by Magnus Larsson, of Sweden. It was the third time in three appearances at the tournament that Sampras, who did not look at ease on the clay courts, has lost in the first round.

Sampras took the first set with some comfort but soon found himself bombarded by a succession of unstoppable forehands from the Swede, ranked No. 43 in the world. Larsson quickly levelled the match by cruising through the second set and maintained his momentum in the decider, moving to a 4-1 lead before driving a forehand down the line on his first match point.

Thomas Muster, the world No. 2, and Boris Becker were also prominent departures. Fabrice Santoro, of France, ranked No. 90 in the world, over-

whelmed Muster 6-2, 7-6, while Becker, who has never won a tournament on clay, went out 6-1, 3-6, 6-7 to Renzo Furlan, of Italy, the world No. 65.

Santoro, playing with marvellous touch, baffled Muster in the first set and then showed his resolve to secure a fine victory, taking the tie-break 7-3 when Muster double-faulted on the second match point.

Muster, who was attempting to become the first man to win in Monte Carlo four times, led 3-1 in the second set, when he appeared to have worked the errors out of his game and come to terms with Santoro's shot selection.

He served for the second set at 5-4 but double-faulted on break point to let Santoro back and the Frenchman went on to record his third win over Muster. "But every time I have to fight for every point," Santoro said. He now faces Sergi Bruguera, of the Spaniard beats Jan Siemerink, of Holland.

Becker had raced through the first set, dropping only one game, but was then out-hit from the baseline by Furlan, who produced a series of passing shots down either flank. The Italian fought back from 4-2 down in the third set as Becker's first-service success rate fell to 38 per cent and he accumulated 39 unforced errors.

Furlan won the first four points in the tie-break, which he eventually claimed 7-4 when a Becker backhand smash on the second match point. He now plays Arnaud Boetsch, of France.

"He didn't miss a shot, he served very well and made a lot of aces. It was very, very aggressive first-set display. But I was very happy with the way I came back after that."

Becker, three times the Wimbledon champion, had suffered a thigh injury in losing to Lionel Roux, of France, in

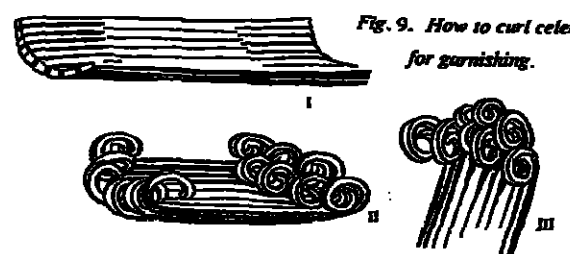
the third round of the Japan Open last week and it was obvious that the German, who returned in Tokyo after a two-month lay-off caused by a wrist injury, was lacking match practice.

Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, the British No. 1 and No. 2, are back on the Queen's Club practice courts after their injuries, searching for full fitness to maintain their world rankings. Henman, who last played in the Lipton championships in Key Biscayne five weeks ago, when he lost to the Spanish qualifier, Julian Alonso, has remained at No. 15 in the world although several of his closest rivals have narrowed the points gap. "There was no pain whatsoever, which is a pleasing sign," he said after practice yesterday.

Rusedski has played only two matches in two comeback attempts since hurting his wrist in the final of the San Jose event, against Sampras, in mid-February. He has dropped four places to No. 40.

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Redgrave and Pinsent joined in pursuit of Sydney gold



Redgrave, left, hopes to achieve Olympic immortality by winning a fifth successive title with, from right, Pinsent, Foster and Cracknell

Two into four equals 2000

Mid-morning in the pink-pannelled locker-room at Leander. Tim Foster, a blur of blond hair and tartan trousers, arrives late. Matthew Pinsent is fretting about the visibility of the sponsor's logo on the new boat. James Cracknell, wreathed in sweat from the gymnasium, sits quietly in the corner as Steve Redgrave shows off the vivid diagonal scar from his emergency appendectomy.

"This feels weird," Redgrave says. The reaction of the others reveals that he is not referring to the consequences of his midnight admission to Wycombe General Hospital a fortnight ago. Their nervous laughter and fleeting eye contact signals unspoken doubt, inner tension.

Little wonder. They are about to be presented to the world as rowing's Fab Four, the crew that bears collective responsibility for Redgrave's entry into Olympic history in Sydney 2000 as the first Briton to win five successive titles. To emphasise the point, Red-

grave's four gold medals are in a wooden presentation case, casually discarded among damp training kit.

For the foreseeable future, Foster and Cracknell will play George and Ringo to Redgrave and Pinsent's John and Paul. Their lives, their very personalities, will be expected to merge. The human chemistry involved is inherently unstable. Redgrave, a man of matchless mental strength, will remain the leader, the talisman. Pinsent will become an increasingly authoritative figure, a naturally articulate spokesman. He is physically peerless and demands respect because of his ability to summon the supreme effort. It is up to the other two to confirm that they are worthy of the privilege of parity.

Their talent has been proved in the private agonies of endurance tests, but has not been fully developed. It is their characters which, initially at least, will be examined in minute detail. Instead of being intimidated by the scale of their ambitions, they must be inspired by the opportunity.

MICHAEL CALVIN



The pursuit of Redgrave's fifth Olympic gold medal, which starts — in competitive terms — at the Munich World Cup regatta at the end of May, is British sports equivalent of the quest for the Holy Grail. The purity of his aim opens up rowing, by nature an enclosed, faintly masonic world, to a wider audience that has no real conception of its masochistic rituals.

For Redgrave, Sydney 2000 began on January 1, 1997. It was designated as a day off but, searching for the subtle self-esteem generated by solitary sacrifice, he stole away from his family to row on the Thames. Similarly, when the removal of his appendix prevented him from joining a training camp in Belgium, he was back in the gym within a week of reviving from the anaesthetic.

When he relaxes, he is a gentle, philosophical figure with a sharp sense of humour. But when he is immersed in

his sport, he is a dark, brooding individual of Heathcliffian intensity. This is the side to which Foster and Cracknell must ultimately respond.

It will help that they have known each other for years. Foster, the smallest of the crew at 5ft 3in, won a world junior gold medal with Pinsent in 1988. Cracknell, approaching his 25th birthday, is a familiar figure at Leander. As Redgrave said: "People outside the group may treat us as legends, but we regard ourselves as friends, colleagues. The reality of it all is not as daunting as, say, when Matt joined me in the pair."

Pinsent, understandably sensitive to a situation that encourages superficial judgment, agreed: "When I started to row with Steve the bottom line was, irrespective of reputation, I just had to get on with it," he said. "I thought of him as nothing other than my partner. We will have to listen to Tim and James, learn to value their input."

"When I sat down and thought about forming a four I realised that one of the traps would lie in Steve and me operating in the same way as before. That's wrong. You can't just plug two new sockets into the system. If there is no compromise, no dialogue, we will not get the best out of ourselves."

Neither Foster nor Cracknell is a conventional character. Foster's flair for one-line humour was underlined yesterday when, referring to Redgrave's predictably premature retirement speech in Atlanta, he said: "I hope that

anyone who tries to shoot him doesn't hit me."

Stroking Oxford in the Boat Race this year has given him a suitable sense of the surreal. "That was quite bizarre," he said. "There am I, just another student, and then, suddenly, I'm in the public eye. I know the attention will be even more intense now. It feels strange because it is almost as if we are involved in two separate things. There is the serious side, the racing, and the sideshow, the press conferences and the like."

A tiny tattoo of an Indian warrior on Cracknell's ankle is one of the legacies of his individualism. He appreciates the irony that he represented one of the biggest threats to Redgrave in Atlanta, where he was struck down by a virus and placed in isolation in the British quarters. Within six hours the team, feigning disgust at the transport system, had moved out.

He was patently upset when he rowed, in the C final for all-rouns, but he was an Olympian. The disappointment of his lack of wider fulfilment drove him to demonstrate his potential in a decisive manner. Pinsent, for one, considers him a kindred spirit.

"Steve and I have moved the goalposts," he said. "We know the burn-out rate is intense. Then he paused. "I was going to say that, as much as we don't want the pressure, there is going to be a huge sense of expectation. But if I'm honest, we do want that pressure, that risk. It's what we're in for."

CRICKET

De Silva assumes command

ARAVINDA DE SILVA rediscovered his best form to guide Sri Lanka towards safety on the fourth day of the first Test match against Pakistan in Colombo.

De Silva joined Arjuna Ranatunga, his captain, in a stand of 129 for the third wicket as Sri Lanka, 48 runs behind on the first innings, recovered from 53 for two to reach 206 for three by the close.

De Silva, who had gone 14 innings without making a Test half-century, finished the day unbeaten with 79 while

Ranatunga was dismissed for 58 by Mushaq, who is playing second fiddle in this match to his fellow slow bowler, Saqlain.

The off spinner followed his five wickets in the Sri Lanka first innings with a stubborn 58 and has taken two wickets in the second innings.

Saqlain and Muhammad Zahid had carried their last wicket stand to 29 before the Pakistan innings closed for 378, Saqlain being run out after batting for five hours.

Russel Arnold and Marvan Atapattu, who opened Sri

Lanka's second innings in place of the injured Sanath Jayasuriya, both holed out playing aggressive strokes against Saqlain but De Silva and Ranatunga ensured there were no further alarms.

De Silva, in commanding form on a slow pitch, took 14 runs off three successive balls from Zahid. He smashed a six to mid-wicket, edged a no-ball for four and then hooked the next ball for another boundary.

Scoreboard, page 53
Countries prepare, page 53

An Inspector Calls

Channel 4, 8.30pm

The final programme in a diverting series features a team of environmental health officers in Birmingham. To give the film a novel twist, all are women and all are graduates. Known as the Sparkies, because their patch is the Sparkbrook area of the city, they deal with 30 complaints a day on stinks, rubbish and noise. Typical cases include a barking dog which is driving the man next door out of his mind and people who dump their rubbish in a park. Fortunately untypical is the council flat from which its tenant has fled leaving not only a mountain of rubbish but a blocked toilet and human waste in revolting profusion. You wonder what university degree could possibly prepare the women for such a horror but as with daily round, they put on their wellies, grit their teeth and get on with it.

Modern Times: The End

BBC2, 9.00pm

Helen Richards's film is an essay in black and white and colour, and presented without commentary, on the changing face of the funeral. There is one fairly traditional ceremony based on the Requiem Mass, preceded by a procession through the streets with the Catholic priest at its head. Elsewhere we see funerals dictated by the desire to save cost or the environment and the absence of religious belief. An Irishman buries his aunt for just £10, using a cardboard coffin which he decorates himself. His funeral address is blunt and unflattering. Declaring that she is a pagan who honours the earth, a woman says that she wants her body to be exposed on a hillside for the benefit of birds and insects. Throughout, the camera pushes remorse aside to give us intimate glimpses of the dead and what becomes of them.

Heroes of Comedy: Kenny Everett

Channel 4, 9.00pm

Perhaps the great puzzle about Kenny Everett was how a natural anarchist should ally himself with Margaret Thatcher, as he did during the Conservative youth rally in 1983. His call to bomb Russia and kick away Michael Foot's stick seemed

Folk on 2

Radio 2, 8.00pm

I have never been much for sandals and kaftan folk singers heard from both sides of the Atlantic, but chance encounter with the Mercury Music Awards on television last year sent me rushing out to buy a Norma Waterson CD. This lady is a class act in anyone's musical language: her voice haunts the bones. Norma and her family band, Waterson Carthy, are presenter Jim Lloyd's studio guests tonight. Waterson's husband is Martin Carthy, regarded as the most influential figure in folk music and a brilliant acoustic guitar player. The third member of Waterson Carthy is the couple's daughter, Eliza, who sings and plays fiddle and who has carved out a successful solo career for herself.

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe, 7.30am Newsbeat, 9.00am Simon Mayo, 10.00am John Peel, 10.30am Nick Campbell, 11.00am Gail Ansell, 11.30am Newsbeat, 12.00pm Evening Session with Steve Lamacq, 1.00pm Newsbeat, 1.30pm Newsbeat, 2.00pm Newsbeat, 2.30pm Newsbeat, 3.00pm Newsbeat, 3.30pm Newsbeat, 4.00pm Newsbeat, 4.30pm Newsbeat, 5.00pm Newsbeat, 5.30pm Newsbeat, 6.00pm Newsbeat, 6.30pm Newsbeat, 7.00pm Newsbeat, 7.30pm Newsbeat, 8.00pm Newsbeat, 8.30pm Newsbeat, 9.00pm Newsbeat, 9.30pm Newsbeat, 10.00pm Newsbeat, 10.30pm Newsbeat, 11.00pm Newsbeat, 11.30pm Newsbeat, 12.00pm Newsbeat, 12.30pm Newsbeat, 1.00am Newsbeat, 1.30am Newsbeat, 2.00am Newsbeat, 2.30am Newsbeat, 3.00am Newsbeat, 3.30am Newsbeat, 4.00am Newsbeat, 4.30am Newsbeat, 5.00am Newsbeat, 5.30am Newsbeat, 6.00am Newsbeat, 6.30am Newsbeat, 7.00am Newsbeat, 7.30am Newsbeat, 8.00am Newsbeat, 8.30am Newsbeat, 9.00am Newsbeat, 9.30am Newsbeat, 10.00am Newsbeat, 10.30am Newsbeat, 11.00am Newsbeat, 11.30am Newsbeat, 12.00am Newsbeat, 12.30am 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Plumbing the dramatic depths of the Peak

I had clearly been a long time since Dr Andrew Atwood played rugby, so long in fact that he couldn't quite remember whether he used to be a wing three-quarter or a wing forward. Sensitively, he practised a bit of both. But it had clearly been even longer since Nigel Cole, director of last night's *Peak Practice* (ITV), had chased the oval ball. As it was lobbed gently down the Cardale three-quarter line every single pass went conspicuously forward. Still, who cares about the rules as long as hunky, muddy Andrew gets to score under the posts.

One of the great things about *Peak Practice*, perhaps the greatest, is that nobody involved in its production ever stops to ask "do you think we've gone too far?". Rules are there to be disregarded, marks there to be overstepped — as the concluding episode to the series showed. The concept of dramatic excess no longer existed.

"Right everyone, last episode coming up — any ideas?" Well, we could have Erica's cottage burning down. "What, the one she's spent the entire series renovating?" Just a thought. "And a good one, make a note somebody — burn down cottage — love it, what else?"

How about Andrew and Erica kissing, you know really kissing? "Yeah, yeah, the snog's a given — next." We've still got to decide whether dreary David and crazy Clare have a happy ending or an unhappy ending? Tell me about it, especially as contracts for the next series haven't been signed yet. How about the Cardale shuffle — little bit happy, little bit unhappy — that way we keep everyone on their toes. Now, subplots.

Er, couldn't we have a macho pilot? "Hmmm...". Suffering from dizzy spells? "Yes." With a son... "Go on..." who is secretly gay? "Love it." And — this is just off the wall, boss — we could get Dr

David to arrange a free flight for that little boy recovering from leukaemia. "With the same pilot he's treating for dizzy spells?" Er, yes. "Hmmm, oh, what the...". It's the last episode, let's do it. As long as everybody realises the budget won't stretch to a plane crash.

So, with nobody brave enough to shout "we've gone too far", *Peak Practice* finished as it began, with some parts that were really quite good (Adrian Lukis and Yolanda Vazquez did well with the David and Clare subplot) and others which were deliciously, exquisitely awful. Which brings me to the final five minutes.

With happy endings breaking out all over the place (Clare loves David, Erica loves Andrew, macho pilot loves gay son really), actors competed to deliver the worst line of television dialogue ever written. Was it a Dr David, in reflective mood on the runway, with: "Life

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

doesn't work out like that — I didn't want Clare to be manic depressive and you didn't want Danny to be gay — but it's happened." Or was it by Dr Erica, who in between having her house burnt down and searching for her real mother, still found time for some quality thinking amid smouldering ruins: "I realised that I was so scared of being hurt by anyone, I didn't want to let them

close — that's why I've been pushing you away." Personally, I loved them too. You decide.

The excellent *Seven Wonders of the World* (BBC2) also came to an end last night, still prompting the two — in this case very minor — criticisms it started with. First, why do the makers insist on revealing so many of the chosen wonders in advance, thereby robbing the programme of any element of surprise? And second, having borrowed both the format and Sue Lawley from *Desert Island Discs*, why is the participant then allowed to ramble on unchecked, choosing whatever wonder he or she pleases? Roy Plomley never had to answer Steven Pinker to choose the camera, the eye and stereo vision as three separate wonders — far too similar, old chap.

Having said that, Pinker (who has the looks of somebody who might have sung very bad pop

songs in the 1970s) rambled on quite fascinatingly last night. For those who didn't see it, he is a professor of psychology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose specialist field is the learning of language in infants. "Any one of the world's 6,000 languages can be learnt by the human infant — without lessons." However, the great mystery of why the British adolescent can't manage another one — even with lots of lessons — was beyond him.

Not surprisingly, Pinker was at his best when talking about language, particularly about things called combinatorial systems (which is why we'll never run out of music or things to say) and on the charming but highly revealing linguistic slips made by children. Apparently, the three-year-old who thought something could "dis-it-appear" knew more about sentence con-

struction that I ever had. What do you mean, you can believe it?

Finally, it was time for our weekly fix of compassion and *Children's Hospital* (BBC1), which remains one of the most cynical pieces of ratings-grabbing television around. Sure, it's moving (and last night's mix of life-threatening hernias, brain-damage and brittle bone disease was harrowing even by its own standards) but served up in a series of no less than 20 programmes, it's clear that our emotions are being steered by automatic pilot. "Ooh, aren't they brave," we think, a specified number of times per episode. "Ooh, aren't they clever," we think, as the medical staff pull off yet another miracle.

Hospitals are hospitals, not soap operas, where involvement makes voyeurs of us all. *Children's Hospital* is addictive television, but that doesn't make it right. Or have I gone too far?

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (50675)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (70336120)

9.05 Election Call Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown answers questions posed by viewers (9034491)

10.00 Style Challenge (29743)

10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (17323)

11.00 News (T) regional news and weather (4221255)

11.05 The Really Useful Show (T) (9764946)

11.35 Snooker: World Championship Jimmy White v Anthony Hamilton and Alan Wootton v Brian Morgan (3926830)

12.35pm Good Living The latest home-style ideas and gardening tips (9971323)

1.00 News (T) and weather (86120)

1.30 Regional News (50318507)

1.45 Neighbours (T) (48034453)

2.10 Snooker: World Championship John Higgins v Graeme Dott. Continues on BBC2 (4176255)

3.30 Playdays (T) (6636032) 3.50 Monster Cate (T) (675439) 4.05 The New York Bear Show (T) (9671255) 4.10 Gadget Boy (8776323) 4.35 Out of Tune (T) (7008323) 5.00 Newsround (T) (5769472) 5.10 Blue Peter (T) (1350863)

5.35 Neighbours (T) (182658)

6.00 News (T) and weather (526)

6.30 Regional News (T) (878)

7.00 How Do They Do That? The last of the series. A crack team of pilots reveal how they can "write" two miles-high across the sky, the carrot cabaret featured in a TV advertisement, and a special guest reveals some closely guarded royal secrets (T) (765)

7.30 Tomorrow's World Plans to automate the French underground system by programming trains to run by themselves and avoid collisions. Plus, a project in Cambridgeshire where pagers are being used to remind amnesiacs of their daily tasks (T) (762)

8.00 The National Lottery Live with Carol Smilie (T) (890217)

8.10 Ballykissangel The tranquility of Ballykissangel is shattered by the appearance of a glamorous figure from Father Clifford's past (T) (894471)

8.00 News (T) and regional news (103385)

9.50 Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats (T) (890411)

9.50 National Lottery Update (911410)

10.00 They Think It's All Over Nottingham Forest general manager Steve Barron and Mike Little join regulars Gary Lineker, David Gower, Lee Hurst and Rory McGrath for the comedy sports quiz, hosted by Nick Hancock (T) (26584)

10.30 48 Hrs (1982) with Nick Nolte, Eddie Murphy and Annette O'Toole. A hard-bitten cop enlists a convicted robber's help to track down two escaped killers. Directed by Walter Hill (T) (7192)

12.00 Film: The Glorious Guy (1965) Western adventure with Tom Tryon, Dave Prentiss and James Caan. A US Cavalry officer disobeys the orders of his General. Directed by Arnold Laven (T) (255089)

1.50am-1.55 Weather (5953908)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. The numbers are listed in the programme listings. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of Genie Development Ltd.

BBC2

6.00am Open University: The Birth of Modern Geometry (2928033) 6.25 One Small Step (2947168) 6.50 Out of the Blue? (8025205)

7.15 See Hear News (8722948)

7.30 Teenage Turtles (T) (4806101) 7.55 The Lowdown (T) (5308675) 8.20 Philbert the Frog (T) (5867120) 8.25 Buzzy Bee and Friends (T) (780597) 8.35 The Raccoons (T) (9526033)

9.00 Discovering Portuguese (3161878) 9.25 Belief File (890956) 9.45 Words and Pictures (2809052) 10.00 Teletubbies (27385) 10.30 Numberline (2025859) 10.45 Cats' Eyes (201014) 11.00 Moving to English (4298385) 11.20 The Art (7863120) 11.40 Study Island (871217) 12.00 The Shape of the World (76007)

12.30pm Working Lunch (33859) 1.00 Geography Collection (7034558) 1.25 Zog Zag (6476236) 1.45 Come Outside (5090430) 2.00 Philbert the Frog (T) (57839762) 2.05 The Adventures of Buzzy Bee and Friends (T) (3783033) 2.30 The Village (33064089) 2.35 Campaign Roadshow (T) (8607168)

3.30 Snooker: World Championship John Higgins v Graeme Dott. Continues on BBC2 (4176255)

6.00 Trek: The Next Generation (T) (827659)

6.45 Snooker: World Championship Tony Drago v Dominic Dale. Plus: Jimmy White v Anthony Hamilton (175526)

7.30 Black Britain why are there so few black people working in the construction trade? (T) (304)

8.00 University Challenge Magdalen College, Oxford v Queen's University, Belfast (T) (4946)

8.30 Home Front Tessa Shaw visits India and the dream kitchen nears completion in the Home Front house (T) (6781)

9.00 Modern Times: The End An amusing exploration of alternative funeral ideas (T) (134255)

9.50 A Woman Called Smith Barbara a 37-year-old paramedic with the Northumbria Ambulance Service (T) (901033)

10.00 Airport (T) (26566)

10.30 Election Broadcast: Liberal Democrats (T) (109236)

10.35 Newsnight (962743)

11.35 Snooker Late-night round-up (137149)

12.25am Weather (3901279)

12.30 Learning Zone: O.U.: The healing power of emotions (86988) 1.00 The Earth's craters (83453) 1.30 The KT Event (95902) 2.00 The Geography Programme/Flight Paths (7811) 4.00 The history truth or fiction? (42278) 4.30 Unleash in the Classroom (71618) 5.00 Basic Skills (40250) 5.30 Voluntary Matters (58647)

Anthony Weir and coffin (9.00pm)

9.00 Modern Times: The End An amusing exploration of alternative funeral ideas (T) (134255)

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HTV

6.00am GMTV (6229168)

9.25 Chain Letters (T) (8151491)

9.55 Regional News (2808078)

10.00 The Time, the Place (54439)

10.30 This Morning (61640439)

12.20pm Regional news (4994507)

12.30 News and weather (9367120)

12.55 Shortland Street (5362439) 1.25 Home and Away (T) (6474014) 1.50 Afternoon Live (5589584) 2.20 Vanessa (T) (2586979) 2.50 Afternoon Live (5540410)

3.20 News (T) (7292410) 3.25 Regional news and weather (729178)

3.30 Total TV (T) (6738491) 3.40 Alphabet Castle (T) (3389498) 3.50 Soaky and Co (T) (6891965) 4.10 Antennas (T) (8954582) 4.20 Tiny Toon Adventures (5871120) 4.40 Harry's Mad (T) (T) (8813762)

5.10 Bagdad Cafe (1124491)

5.40 News (T) and weather (358965)

6.00 Home and Away (T) (192762)

6.25 HTV Weather (906453)

6.30 The West Tonight (T) (503014)

6.45 Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats (850087)

Tracy Bradin as Tricia (6.50pm)

6.50 Coronation Street Angle returns home to discover a surprise in store for her (T) (866156)

7.20 Uefa Champions' League — Live! Bob Wilson introduces coverage of the second leg of the semi-final between Manchester United and Borussia Dortmund (T) (9969433)

NB: The following programmes are subject to change and late running

9.30 The Rock and Goal Years Michael Parkinson hosts as celebrities recall the musical hits and great soccer moments from 1979 and 1990 (40149)

10.00 News (T) and weather (94472)

10.30 Regional news (T) (828858)

10.40 In Suspicious Circumstances Edward Woodward presents dramatisations of two true-life crime stories (T) (928168)

11.40 Uefa Champions' League Highlights of tonight's semi-finals: Manchester United v Borussia Dortmund, and Juventus v Ajax (303326)

12.45am Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club (32298)

1.15 Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (731305)

1.40 18 Again! (1988) Comedy with George Burns, Charlie Schletter and Tony Roberts. Directed by Paul Flaherty (208811)

3.30 Not Fade Away (T) (74873)

4.30 The Time, the Place (T) (68144)

5.00 Coronation Street (T) (44076)

5.30 News (20811)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:

12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (9362439)

5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (1124491)

6.25-6.45 Central News (292236)

12.45am Dating the Enemy (580144)

1.45 Family Bunker (586328)

2.45 The Chart Show (9347908)

3.35 Comedy Central (2261637)

4.35 Central Jobfinder '97 (6884786)

5.20 Asian Eye (2070231)

WEST-COUNTRY

As HTV West except:

12.20pm-12.30 Illuminations (4994507)

12.55 Home and Away (2679762)

1.20-1.50 Emmerdale (70341762)

5.10-5.40 Home and Away (1124491)

6.00-6.45 Westcountry Live (947410)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except:

12.55-1.25 A Country Practice (9362439)

5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (1124491)

6.25 Anglia News (258912)

6.25-6.45 Anglia News (292236)

10.29 Anglia Air Watch (243781)

Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (53385)

7.00 The Big Breakfast (58743)

9.00 Bewitched (11149)

9.30 Film: For Valour (4568897)

11.10 Pete Smith Specialities (4230217)

11.35 Extreme (3870897)

12.30pm Ricki Lake (51255)

1.00 Slot Melthrin (70548138)

1.15 Lisabeth (89093043)

1.30 Australia Wild (50526)

2.00 Racing from Epsom and Puncelstown (8014)

4.00 Fifteen-to-One (859)

4.30 Mrs Cohen's Money (743)

5.00 5 Pump (6050217)

5.15 Film (5761217)

5.30 Countdown (323)

6.00 Newyddion (776491)

6.05 Heno (110168)

6.35 Bob Yn Ddau (101043)

7.00 Pobl y Cwm (213149)

7.25 Plermio (89093043)

8.00 Phwoar! (8014)

8.30 Dardlledid Etholadol (851878)

8.35 Newyddion (432304)

9.10 Spin City (221566)

9.40 Roseanne (820586)

10.10 Etholadol 97 (77768)

10.25 Brookside (748259)

11.00 ER (78507)

12.00 Party Election Broadcast (592608)

12.05am Midnight Special (9136818)

1.35-5.30 Under the Moon (82958809)

CHANNEL 4

6.00am Sesame Street (T) (53385)

7.00 The Big Breakfast (58743)

9.00 Bewitched (T) (11149)

9.30 For Valour (1937, b/w) Comedy directed and starring Tom Walls, and Ralph Lynn. An army major's attempts to reward the soldier who saved his life fail miserably (4568897)

11.10 Pete Smith Specialities Acrobatics and Fishing Feats (4203217) 11.35 Extreme (T) (T) (9570887) 12.30pm Light Lunch (47761) 1.30 Australia Wild Nature series (T) (50526)

2.00 Racing from Epsom and Puncelstown Lesley Graham introduces live coverage of the 2.05, 2.35, 3.10 and 3.40 races from Epsom and the 2.40 and 3.15 (Heineken Gold Cup Chase) from Puncelstown (8014)

4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (859) 4.30 Countdown (T) (743) 5.00 Ricki Lake (T) (3830) 5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (323)

6.00 Party of Five Teen drama series. Julia makes an unexpected decision about college (T) (936304)

6.50 Fresh Pop (77217)

7.00 Channel 4 News (T) (686217)

7.55 Thatcher's Children First-time voters discuss the general election (T) (97859)

8.00 Brookside Has Bel ruined any chances of happiness with



RACING 50,51

Vodafone threatens to pull the plug on Epsom Derby

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 23 1997

CRICKET 53

Leicestershire set off in pursuit of championship repeat



Munich beckons Manchester United

Ferguson seeks May date with destiny

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE Old Trafford forecourt was packed with cars yesterday. Four parties strolled in front of the stadium's mass of empty red seats and bent to touch the turf. Outside, they stood and stared up at the statue of Sir Matt Busby, holding a football under his arm, and the black and white clock inscribed with a date and a single word: Munich.

Tonight, for the first time since the air crash that claimed the lives of so many of Busby's team, in a game that will be as high on emotion as any that the arena has witnessed in the past three decades, Manchester United can ensure that the name of the German city that has been synonymous with tragedy for nearly 40 years may be remembered, too, because of a footballing occasion.

If they overhaul Borussia Dortmund in the second leg of the European Cup semi-final, they will make a sentimental journey back to Munich at the end of next month to compete, probably against Juventus, for the most prestigious prize in world club football.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, did not mention the last yesterday afternoon, but as he sat in a conference room behind the directors' box at Old Trafford, he added to the sense of destiny surrounding the match by saying that he believed it would be the stage for the babes in his team, who have brought them this far, to become men.

Ferguson was, by turns, passionate and relaxed, acutely aware of the danger of conceding what would surely be a decisive away goal, but desperate for United to be free to play in a way that "reflects the ability of the team", desperate for them to turn on the style on "Old Trafford's biggest night in 30 years".

As he mulled over the pitfalls inherent in trying to wipe out the 1-0 advantage that Rene Tresechok's goal in Dortmund has given United's opponents, his mind wandered briefly to the vulnerability of young men such as Gary Neville, David Beckham, Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs. "For them," Ferguson said, "it can be a bit like when you were a little boy and you used to read the comics, and even though you did not believe them, you still read them. There is this great thing about reading about the great players from abroad, from Milan, Ajax and Dortmund, and

from the German camp that Matthias Sammer, the European footballer of the year, and Jürgen Kohler have been ruled out with injury. Ferguson said that the return of Dortmund's strikers, Stéphane Chapuisat and Karlheinz Riedle, would hold no fears for him because their presence would indicate exactly what system the Germans would play.

United will be missing the suspended Roy Keane, but such has been their form in their past two FA Cup Premier Cup victories, over Blackburn Rovers and Liverpool, that Ferguson has plenty of ways to fill the gap.

With David May returning to the centre of defence alongside Gary Pallister, it is likely that Ferguson will push Ronnie Johnsen into the centre of midfield to partner Butt, with Beckham on the right and Giggs, if he is fully fit, on the left. Eric Cantona will be partnered either by Andy Cole or Ole Gunnar Solskjær in attack.

"I have got selection dilemmas everywhere," Ferguson said. "Our form in the last two games has been excellent, but the players involved understand that I have got some hard choices and that it is not easy for me. But morale is high after the Liverpool result and we could not be in better shape. There are no excuses. They should just go out and enjoy it and try to express themselves."

"I take all the points about Dortmund missing players in the last game and I can understand why they are optimistic and why there are people in England, too, who think the same way. They think they are through to the final, but anybody who adopts that attitude with us gets a fright."

"This could be a night when a lot of our players really make their names. I do not know how much of Manchester United you have seen yet. I think there is more to come and tomorrow night will be a great test for them."



Young supporters bedecked in blue and white set off for Hillsborough for the FA Cup semi-final replay. Photograph: Doug Marke

Football fever comes to Chesterfield

David Powell finds the residents of a normally quiet town revelling in their football team's moment in the spotlight

It was an 18-hour day, at least, for keen supporters of Chesterfield yesterday. Geoff Mitchell, the chairman of the supporters' club, was climbing into a taxi at 6am, heading for television studios. Doreen Harper, 72, was up at 6.15am. "Normally, I stop in bed until nine," she said, "but I have waited 60 years for a day like this."

Even before the fruit and veg vans were unloading in the market square at 8am, the blue and white favours of Chesterfield were on sale. In one ear: "Jaffas, ten a pound." In the other: "Get your hats, scarves, flags, semi-final souvenirs here."

Two housewives were chatting. It could have been any high street, any shopping day, women discussing bargains and rip-offs. Except that this was Chesterfield on FA Cup semi-final replay day and Sheila Hunt, 56, was not interested in the price of fish or tights. She wanted to know where she could buy "one of those blue wigs".

Mrs Hunt and her friend stood proud in their basic Blue Army uniform, scarf and shirt, no different from most other housewives passing by on this extraordinary day. Everywhere was Spireites' blue and white — people, shop windows, cakes, ice creams. The only wonder was that nobody had painted the famous crooked spire — "but, if we reach the final, one blue face said."

Superdrug opened at 8.30am, playing the Chesterfield FC record. We Can Build Our Dream, and then played it again at 8.34am, 8.38am, 8.42am and so on. One of the staff had filled a 90-minute tape with consecutive recordings and the manager agreed to let it play "one hour on, one hour off".

By breakfast time, Geoff Mitchell had given interviews to GMTV, The Big Breakfast

and BBC television. The Times intercepted him leaving the market area, where The Big Breakfast was camped at 8.10am. "I have got to be home for 8.45am because BBC Radio Manchester want a word," he said. "Yet I am only a fan. What must it be like for the manager and players?"

Mitchell thought back to the beginning, to the home tie with Bury in the first round. Gate: 5,104. "I was thinking 'Here we are again, FA Cup, we have an abysmal record. I just hope we can make it into the second round.' Chesterfield won 1-0."

However, it is the 3-2 fourth-round victory at Bolton Wanderers that he remembers best. "What we saw that night was incredible. Kevin Davies scored a hat-trick. He was slotting the ball in, yet, in the previous home game, he had similar one-to-one chances

and did not put them away. When you saw him charging in on goal, you wondered what was the chance of him being able to come up with one. But three?"

"Intellectually, we know what is happening, but emotionally we are perhaps not coming to terms with it. You get a lower league mentality and do not expect it to happen, but you know something is happening when the Chesterfield ticket office is selling tickets in the middle of the night." As happened last week when police advised the office to open when queues for the replay built up.

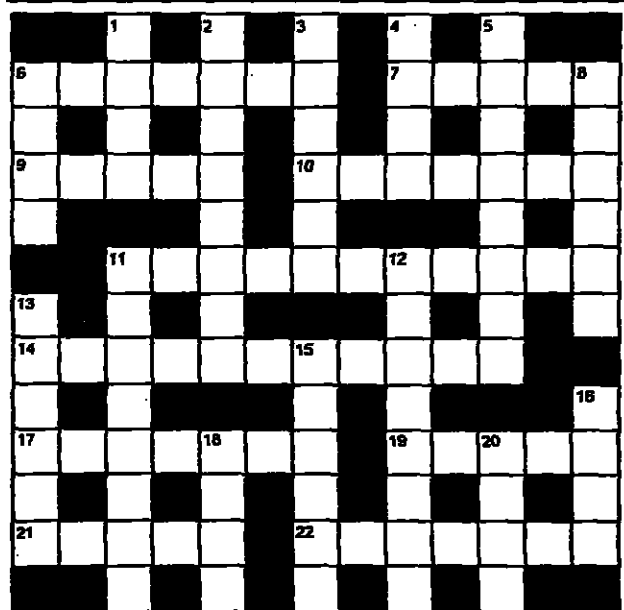
Doreen Harper, 60 years a supporter, was at Hillsborough last night with three generations of her family: husband, daughter, grandchildren. She recalls going to Millwall for a New Year's day match in the Seventies when

Chesterfield were bottom of the fourth division. Her early start yesterday was precipitated by wanting to be where the television cameras were.

At the Chesterfield Snooker Club, the world championship was forgotten. Outside, the Cup-tie was advertised as showing inside, not coverage from the Crucible, on at the same time. Two leisure centres erected screens to show the match and seemingly every bar was tuned to Sky. Only at the Pomegranate Theatre could you find an antidote to Spireites.

Last night was the opening night of The Importance of Being Ernest. Who said that theatre was all about timing? The show would go on, though, and there would be no score checks from Hillsborough during the intervals. So said Stuart Basson, the stage manager, yesterday morning, adding: "There may be a virtue in selling it as a football-free zone." Not that he would be trying it. Basson missed first night to go to the game.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1075

- ACROSS
6 Destiny (good) luck (7)
7 Sensational, vivid (5)
9 Fattened eating-fowl (5)
10 London exhibition hall (7)
11 Patron of England (5,6)
14 One's especial delight (5,3,3)
17 Draw towards oneself (7)
19 Racing, cruising vessel (5)
21 From here (5)
22 Sour liquid, character (7)
- DOWN
1 Tight hold, control (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1074
ACROSS: 1 Duck 4 Barnardo 8 Tortoise 9 Ajax 10 Cruet 11 Platoon 13 Watson 15 No-show 18 Dockets 20 Tors 23 Torsy 24 Electrode 25 Gymkhana 26 Raile
DOWN: 2 Odeur 3 Kittens 4 Bait 5 Riesling 6 Apart 7 Diabolo 10 Cow 12 Anathema 14 Apology 16 Scooter 17 Who 19 Kayak 21 Spock 22 Feta

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1070
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
ACROSS: 1 Mice 3 Stammer 8 Numeric 9 Nexus 10 Elope 11 Abysmal 13 Fall about 17 Rotunda 19 Troll 20 Choux 22 Rescind 23 Defunct 24 Rear
DOWN: 1 Monkey 2 Come off it 3 Sick as a parrot 4 Annoy 5 Mix 6 Result 7 Ordeal 12 Meteorite 14 Obfuscate 15 Graced 16 Glider 18 Nixon 21 Owl

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic or international network is B A Timbs, Twyford, Winchester.
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All flights subject to availability.

Gascoigne taxes Smith's patience

By KEVIN MCCARRA

PAUL GASCOIGNE may not have broken his club's heart, but he has loosened its mighty grip on diplomacy. Rangers have always taken pride in privacy, but Walter Smith, the manager, has at last been provoked out of dignified reticence, into making a public admission of his exasperation with the England midfielder player.

His opinions will surprise nobody who is familiar with life at Ibrox, but their expression marks a new stage in a deteriorating relationship between the club and Gascoigne. "His actions," Smith said in an interview, "have tarnished the club's and my own image a great deal and it's been a very unpleasant side for me to have to handle."

The manager also admitted that he has grown less and less sure that he made the right

decision in signing Gascoigne from Lazio, for £4.3 million, in 1995. The player himself was not minded to challenge Smith's observations, remarking yesterday that he could not see any reason for "all the fuss".

For once, Gascoigne, 29, may be betraying signs of maturity. Perhaps he recognises that a rebuke is wholly merited. This season, he has admitted beating his now estranged wife, Sheryl, and while his failings as an athlete are lesser matters, they too have caused Rangers distress.

Since injuring himself during a trivial five-a-side tournament in January, he has been unable to start a match for Rangers. During his convalescence, Smith gave him time off, but had not anticipated that Gascoigne would use it for a much-photographed outing in Soho with Chris Evans and Danny Baker.

Smith is, in some respects, an indulgent man who never expects his squad to practise self-denial, but he has become exasperated by the Englishman's apparent inability to behave with discretion while socialising. The images of Gascoigne at play, however, offer a misleading impression of his existence.

He often seems a solitary figure and is usually the very last player to leave Ibrox after the day's training, as if he cherished the seclusion of the stadium and doubted whether there would be any satisfaction in his life beyond its walls. It now remains to be seen whether he will be evicted from the premises.

The assumption that Gascoigne, whose contract ends next year, is to be discarded may yet prove glib. In crudely pragmatic terms, the player has been precious to Rangers in their quest, now effectively

completed, to win nine successive championships. Without him, it is likely that Rangers would not have taken the title last season.

His influence had been greater than ever this season and he had scored 17 goals by January. Smith's appreciation of Gascoigne's significance will not have dropped, even if his patience with the player has dwindled. An offer that would allow Rangers to recoup their £4.3 million investment could prove tempting, but the club cannot discard Gascoigne lightly.

In any case, he may see little appeal in the reported interest of clubs such as Derby County, who can hardly provide him with the access to the European Cup on offer at Ibrox. The romance and affection may have departed, but Gascoigne's relationship with Rangers could trundle on for some time to come.

Lawrence ready to brave comeback

By ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT



Lawrence: indomitable

FIVE years after suffering the most distressing and dramatic of injuries during a Test match in New Zealand, David Lawrence is poised to complete an astonishing comeback today by playing for Gloucestershire against the county champions, Leicestershire.

Lawrence's career was widely assumed to be over when he failed to recover from the multiple fractures of a kneecap, sustained at Wellington early in 1992. Even Lawrence had admitted defeat and set up his own business, running a wine bar in Bristol.

Just before Christmas last year, however, the muscular character known to all as

an indomitable character and, in the past five days, has bowled well enough to convince the club he is ready.

"Of course, it is a gamble," August said, "but he is certainly fit. He is still getting the ball down mighty quick and will have batsmen hopping around."

Lawrence, now 33, played five Tests for England between 1988 and 1992 and was commonly acknowledged as the quickest Englishman on the county circuit. He was also big, brave and hugely popular. If he plays today, many of those present when his career was so violently interrupted will hold their breath for him.

Reports from all of the first-class matches as The Times provides unrivalled coverage of cricket this summer

"Syd" decided that he no longer wished to be known as a former fast bowler. "He certainly took us by surprise," Philip August, the cricket secretary, said. "We were all sceptical at first, but the longer it went on, the more we realised it wasn't a gimmick." Lawrence has already suffered a setback. He went to Zimbabwe on Gloucestershire's pre-season tour and was unable to play because of a hamstring strain. But he is

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